



## Factors affecting Reorganisation of States

### Abstract

*Reorganisation of states in an important provision provided under the Constitution of India. For understanding the concepts and factors working behind the reorganisation of states this article helps a lot. The aim of this article is to show what are the factors involve behind the reorganisation of states and what are the roles of the committees in it. This paper is not limited to the philosophical aspect but also discuss a present case. The content provided in this article is written after analysing various other scholars writings, due to this it gets its authenticity. This paper provides the analysis of the factors behind the reorganisation of states. It is hoped that the analysis under this study will help the readers, researchers, and practitioners in understanding the concept of reorganisation of the states in India so that they can become more efficient in their work.*

### Key Words

*Reorganisation, States, Cases, Constitution, Committees.*

### ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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### Introduction

On 22nd December 1953, Prime Minister Pt. Nehru made a statement in Parliament to the effect that a commission would be appointed to examine "Objectively and dispassionately" the question of reorganization of the states of the Indian Union so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit, as well as the nation as a whole, is promoted'.

A commission that is known by the nature of its work as the 'States Reorganisation Commission was appointed by a resolution of the Home Ministry on 29th December 1953. The Commission consisted of three members namely Mr. Justice Fezel Ali, Dr. H.N. Kungru, and Dr. K.N. Penniker. The commission was independent and was empowered to report on the state boundaries for the entire country. Paragraph 7 of the resolution laid down the terms of the commission -

"The commission will investigate the conditions, the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. They will be free to consider any proposal relating to such reorganization. The Government expects that the commission would, in the first instance, not go, into the details, but make recommendations regarding the broad principles which should

govern the solution of this problem and if they so choose, the broad lines on which particular states should be reorganized and submit an interim report for the consideration of Government".<sup>1</sup> Paragraph four of the resolution laid down the factors which were to govern the reorganization of states.

"The language and culture of an area have an undoubted importance as they represent a pattern of living which is common in that area. In considering a reorganization of states, however, other important factors have also to be kept in mind. The essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial, economic, and administrative considerations are almost equally important, not only from the point of view of each state but for the whole nation. India has embarked upon a great ordered plan for her economic, cultural and moral progress. Changes which interfere with the successful prosecution of such a national plan would be harmful to the national interest.

### **Reaction to the Appointment of S.R.C.**

The decision to appoint a commission on state boundaries by the Government was welcomed by various group leaders in Parliament, although there was a difference of opinion on the time given to the commission. The protagonists of linguistic states like Mr. S. Nijalingappa, President of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, expected good results from the appointment of the Commission. Mr. S. K. Patil said in Bombay that the Government of India deserved congratulations for appointing a commission to examine the reorganisation problem. But it got mixed welcome in the sense that different sections welcomed it for different sets of reasons and with different degrees of enthusiasm. The communist group in Parliament while welcoming the announcement considered it belated. Sri Y.B. Chavan thought that it was a step further in the formation of states on a linguistic basis. Dr. Dharendra Nath Sen (Ex. Editor Hindustan Standard) felt generally unhappy about the personnel of the commission and particularly about the Chairmen whose, "antecedents and interest do not entitle him to claim a detached or dispassionate view of the problems with which the commission is confronted."

### **Factors Governing Reorganisation**

Whatever might have been the nature of its welcome Prime Minister's announcement in this regard has been unequivocal one, he declared that although local language and culture have importance, the reorganisation of states can not be based on language alone as 'there are other important factors which have to be borne in mind. It did not, therefore, hold out any hope to protagonists of linguist, rather it emphasized the necessity of what, we have termed the rationalistic approach. Referring to other important factors which must be taken into consideration in the reorganisation of the states Prime Minister observed," The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial, economic, and administrative considerations are almost equally important, not only from the point of view of each state but for the whole nation. The noteworthy points in the statement are:

1. That the linguistic basis of the reorganisation of states has not been accepted by Government nor is the commission, commissioned to devise ways and means of bringing into linguistic states throughout the length and breadth of India.
2. The main task before the commission is to recommend to the Government the broad principles on which reorganisation of states should be effected.
3. That they may or may not indicate the lines on which particular states should be reorganised. The net effect left in our minds therefore is that the Government is in favor of the reorganisation of states on a rational basis."

The Government resolution that appointed the commission emphasized the following broad principles:

- i) Preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India.
- ii) Linguistic and cultural homogeneity.

- iii) Financial, economic and administrative considerations.
- iv) Successful working of the National Plan.

## **Language as a Factor in Reorganisation of States**

On the basis of the historical study of the Indian States Reorganisation, it is clear that it is not possible to overlook the importance of language, in the redistribution of political units. Nevertheless, the fact that each region had its language provided a logical basis for the demand of the redistribution of provinces.

Language plays an important role in the social, economic, and educational development of a nation. India presents a vivid example of linguistic heterogeneity with a picturesque mosaic of over 200 languages spread throughout the country. In the present situation the multiplicity of languages has been posing grave problems in the development of a nation. Rival claims are being made by various political and cultural agencies and pressure groups regarding language. The mark of day-to-day routine in a unit is conducted in the language of the people, this will make it easier for the people to approach the Government and to present problems which they face. The chances of misunderstanding are lessened when there is an easy and common medium of expression. The local languages in India are spoken in areas with historical backgrounds. The political evolution of India in the 20th century witnessed the growth of the regional languages which manifest the aspirations of the people for higher goals. The demand for linguistic states is a consequent development of this understanding. As there are well-defined linguistic regions it was possible to have homogeneous units based on linguistic principle. The application of the linguistic principle would also not create many difficulties as many of the states such as West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, U.P. and Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat, Saurashtra, Mysore, and Travancore Cochin were either completely unilingual or could be made so with only minor adjustments of boundaries. In the South also the creation of Andhra State made the problem easier and the residuary region of Madras was mainly a Tamil State. There in view of the existing units it would not be difficult to form further linguistic states in the Indian federation. S.R. Commission accepted the importance of language in States reorganisation and stated, "A federal Union such as ours presupposes that the units are something more than mere creatures of administrative convenience. The constituent states in a federal republic must each possess a minimum degree of homogeneity to ensure the emotional response which is necessary for the working of democratic institutions. The states of the Indian Union can achieve this internal cohesiveness only if they are constituted on a unilingual basis, because language being the vehicle for the communication of thought and feeling, provides the most effective single band for uniting the people. Linguistic homogeneity therefore, provides the only rational basis for reconstructing the states, for it reflects the social and cultural pattern of living obtaining in well-defined regions of the country."<sup>2</sup>

## **Language Alone cannot be basis of Reorganisation**

In any rational and scientific planning that may take place in regard to the provinces of India in the future, homogeneity of language alone cannot be decisive or even an important factor. Administrative convenience, History, Geography, Economy, Culture, and many other matters will also have to be given due weight. It may be that the provinces thus formed may show homogeneity of language and in a way might resemble linguistic provinces. But in forming the provinces, the emphasis should be primarily on administrative convenience and homogeneity of language will enter into consideration only as a matter of administrative convenience and not by its own independent force.<sup>2</sup> In the congress party today opinion seems to be sharply divided on the issue of re-adjustment of state boundaries. While one set of Congressmen claims language to be the all important basis of this readjustment and others feel that several factors besides language must be taken into consideration. They're taking note of the needs of the normal working, it is impossible to form unilingual units in the complete sense of the term. No water-tight compartmentalisation on a linguistic principle is possible, some areas here and there have to be adjusted for continuity in administration and to avoid the heavy cost of change.

The States Reorganisation Commission considered language as one of the factors in the adjustment of state boundaries but did not depend on it solely. Commission's balanced approach would appear to be:

- (a) To recognise linguistic homogeneity as an important factor that may help in the administration of the state but not to consider it as an overall binding principle without paying regard to other considerations, administrative financial or political.
- (b) To ensure that communicational, educational and cultural needs of different language groups, whether resident in unilingual or composite states are properly met.
- (c) Where satisfactory conditions exist and the balance of economic, political and administrative considerations favor composite states, to continue them with the necessary safeguards for all sections of people to enjoy equal rights and opportunities.
- (d) To repudiate the 'Homeland' concept, which negates the principle of equal opportunities and equal rights for all citizens throughout the Indian Union.
- (e) To reject the theory of 'One language one state' for there can be more than one state speaking the same language as such the theory is not justified on grounds of linguistic homogeneity.
- (f) Finally, to the extent that the realisation of unilingualism at state level would tend to breed a particularist feeling, to counter balance that feeling by positive measures to give a deeper content to Indian nationalism; to promote interplay of regional cultures and to reinforce the links between the Center and the state in order to work out national policies and programs.

Para 162 of the Commission states "We now summarise our final views on the role of language as a factor bearing on the reorganisation of states. After a full consideration of the problem in all its aspects we have come to the conclusion that it is neither possible nor desirable to reorganise states on the basis of the single test of either language or culture, but that a balanced approach to the whole problem is necessary in the interests of our national unity."<sup>3</sup>

## **Economic and Financial Factors**

In the functioning of a federal policy the constituent units must have the necessary resources to meet their ordinary expenses for the establishment of various developmental projects that may be necessary. While re-arranging the state boundaries on a new basis of financial viability of the unit must also receive due consideration. The very purpose of creating units based on regional varieties may not be served unless they are able to provide for the economic requirements of the inhabitants. However much the center may assist the units, it is necessary that the units should also be self supporting to some extent. 1. While detaching a portion of territory or adding the same to other unit, the likely impact of various factors such as industry, agriculture and the natural resources must be properly weighed with a view to ensuring that the changes do not adversely effect the above factors. While making the changes demanded by popular opinion an important point to be kept in view, according to the commission was that they should not interfere with the smooth execution of national projects. The change should permit the people to make efforts for the development of their areas. In view of this explanation there could also be advanced an idea of making the political units on the basis of economic regions. In some of the memorandum submitted to the commission, the point was emphasised that the administrative units should be made to conform to natural economic regions. 2. But the commission rejected this idea and found it difficult to equate the economic regions with administrative units. However efforts should be made, the commission pointed out to avoid a wide disparity in the economic resources of various regions and the Central Government should help the backward areas in this development. 1.

## **Historical Tradition**

A common history gives a sense of kinship and oneness. It must therefore be regarded as a factor relevant to the reorganisation of states. But an understanding of history from a local point of view will also create narrow regional feelings. In fact there is a great need for an understanding of the history of integrated

Indie and such an understanding can strengthen common ideas and teach a broader culture of the nation which is essential for national unity. The common historical tradition of a region cannot be overlooked while creating a political unit, but an over emphasis of local history should be avoided. History is a great source of information and on the basis of past facts, it provides an integrity to an area as distinct from the others. The memory of the past is also a source of inspiration. The maintenance of relationship between the past and the present is very important but requires a rational explanation. It will be improper to interpret local facts of history for some narrow motive. Moreover, it will be impossible to create political units on the basis of the available facts of past Indian History.<sup>4</sup>

The country has a long past and at one time or other each area possessed through the administrative jurisdiction of various princely states. Therefore, wherever, there is an attempt to distinct an area on the basis of historical facts a dispute must be resolved by reference to the present conditions such as the economic welfare of the people.

### **Geographical Factor**

The view that the boundaries of the units should be geographic was put forward in some of the memoranda submitted to the Commission Geographical contiguity of units is undoubtedly essential for administrative convenience. Contiguity, however, it must be emphasized does not necessarily imply or involve the need for a geographical frontier and it has been argued that states should ordinarily be marked off by natural boundaries like mountains, rivers, and watersheds. But it is impossible. Important geographical factors can be utilized for the development of adjacent areas. They can be used to assist in economic planning instead of being used to mark and emphasize distinctions between the political units.

### **Administrative Efficiency and Size of the Units**

For an efficient administration such factors as homogeneity of language, geographical compactness and easy means of communication are all essential. Secondly the changes once made should be of a durable nature and provide satisfaction to the people by removing the sense of uncertainty about the jurisdiction of an area; for fear and uncertainty are the main factors that discourage enterprising people from investing money in the area and it can certainly hamper the exploitation of economic resources. Moreover, attention must also be paid to the size of the state, because it is a relevant consideration for good administration. It is advantageous to have units of such size as can easily be managed as this would mean a closer link between the electorate and its representatives. This may easily be achieved in a smaller state. But the idea of a small state is not completed without taking into consideration the modern requirements of communities. Administrative convenience depends very much on the proper utilisation of material and human resources and the economic sufficiency of the state. In considering the size of the units it must also be borne in mind that the states in India really constitute a federal union and are not merely administrative units. This requires stable units which are politically conscious and economically self sufficient. Equally the population of state is a valuable consideration and at the same time it must not be a weak state. Apart from that it is in the fitness of things to have larger states in India so as to save an unnecessary expenditure in organising so many small states. But pleading for a larger state does not mean defeating the very purpose for which they are created. The idea is that every state should have adequate resources to fulfil the responsibilities of a full fledged constituent unit of the union.<sup>5</sup>

### **Unity and National Security of India**

The commission states that the first essential objective of any scheme of reorganisation must be the unity and security of India. Any movement which may impair the unity of the country must ultimately affect the welfare of all sections of the Indian people. Any measure of reorganisation which is likely to create tension and disharmony weakens the sense of unity among the people of India should not, therefore, be countenanced. In the interest of national unity, the administrative and political structure must be based on the primary of the nation.

The administrative setup in strategic areas should be determined primarily by considerations of national security. When border areas are not under the direct control of the center it would be safer to have relatively large and resourceful states.

The commission admitted that reorganisation problems vary from region to region. Interplay for centuries of historical, linguistic and geographical and economic and other factors have produced peculiar patterns indifferent regions. Each case should be dealt with differently as it has its own background. Besides the problems of reorganisation are so complex that it would be un-realistic to determine any case by a single test alone. J.V.P. Committee and Der Commission also suggested for considering all the factors.<sup>6</sup>

## **Reorganised Units**

In its report submitted on September 30, 1955. The S.R.C. proposed a scheme of reorganisation in which the component units of the Indian Union were to consist of only two categories, namely 16 states forming the federating units of the union and three territories were to be centrally administered in place of the complicated and transitional organisation into Part A, B and Part C. States and Part D territories as existed since the inauguration of the constitution.

The linguistic principle received recognition in the formation of most of the states. Exceptions to this principle were permitted in the cases of Bombay and Punjab. The commission did not favor the partition of Bombay State on a linguistic basis. Similarly, no separate Punjabi speaking state could be formed in their view. The commission recommended five states in the South Karnataka, Madras, Kerala, Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh. These states were constituted linguistically as homogeneous units. The language test proved quite practicable in the fixation of the political boundaries of these states. But there were specific cases in which the commission clarified its stance that language was not to be taken as a decisive factor, particularly when there was any dispute in border areas.

The commission had a sympathetic attitude for the state of Karnatak like that of the Linguistic Provinces Commission (1948) and it (S.R.C.) remarked in the same mood. "It has been generally recognised that in the provincial distribution, under the kannadigas suffered most, with their areas split up into four units in three of which they were at the tail end and reduced to the position of ineffective minorities. The All Indie Congress Committee in 1927, the All Parties Conference in 1928 and the Indian Statutory Commission in 1930, all recognised the legitimacy of the claims of the Kannadigas to unification. The Der Commission also expressed the view that the Kennediges would prosper and be able to manage their affairs much better under their own Government, if such Government were possible."

Karnataka was to be a linguistic state like others. But in this case also the decision about several places was influenced by other considerations. In the case of the Kolar district 54% of the people spoke Telegu and only 21% of the people spoke Kennade. Therefore on the basis of language the district should have formed a part of the Andhra State. But other aspects of the problem of reorganisation were pointed out by the commission: the district was more closer to Mysore and its gold mining industry was also built up by the Mysore Government. Taking into account the industrial development of the district the commission proposed that it should remain where it was. (with the proposed state of Karnataka).

Similarly while taking a decision on a portion of the Bellary district, the commission was not guided strictly by the linguistic factor. The Bellary district is a whole one unit with strong ties of geographical and economic relations. Lastly, the majority of the people are Kennediges. Justice Misra was mainly guided by what he described "Linguistic Gravity". The commission recommended that the portion of Bellary district along the course of Tungbhadra be transferred from Karnataka to the Andhra State. The district had considerable trade relations with the Andhra State. Further, the Bellary town was also well connected with all the district headquarters of the Rayalaseema area of Andhra. The commission also indicated that the addition of this eres to Andhra would assist in the smooth functioning of the Tung-bhadra Project. They stated that "What has

weighed with us in arriving at the conclusion is the cumulative effect of three main considerations, namely administrative convenience, economic links, and the importance of Tung-Bhadra Project to the Rayalaseema district of Andhra.

In the case of Belgaun also the commission had to ignore the linguistic consideration to a certain extent. The Chendgedtaluk of Belgaum district was predominantly Merathi speaking area and the commission reported that it should be administered by the state of Bombay. As regards the two taluks of Khenapur end Belgaun the Marathi speaking people were 53.9% and 51.4% respectively. The other taluks of the district were predominantly Kennade speaking. While taking administrative convenience into account the commission recommended that the Belgaum town which was the district headquarters, along with the Belgauntaluk should also go to Karnataka. They put the problem thus “All the taluks of Belgeun district had economic relation with both the Marathi as well as Kannada speaking areas. Neither the Belgaum town nor the other disputed areas, however, have any particularity marked economic affiliations with the Marathi-speaking district of Bombay. There is no case, therefore, for detaching either Khanapur or Belgaum portions or Chikodi from the rest of the Belgaum district:

Dealing with Madras state the commission examined the claim advanced on behalf of Madras for the addition of Travancore-Cochin. The claim was made mainly on linguistic considerations and on the grounds of geographical contiguity and related to 9 taluks, Thovels, Agastheeswaran, Kalkula, Vilvanoode, and Neyyattikere in Trivandrum district, Devi Kulam and Peermede in Kottayam district, Shenkotta, and Chittoor and Trichur district.

The language figures in these areas show that in the Southern taluks namely Agastheeswaram, Thovala, Kal- Kules, and Vilevancode, the percentage of Tamil speaking people is above 79%. The Shenkotta Taluk was partly an enclave in Tirunelveli district of Madras and the percentage of Tamil speaking people in this taluk was about 93. Physically and geographically it belonged to Tirunelveli district and it was recommended by the States Reorganisation Commission to be merged in this district.

The Devikulam and Peermedetaluks stood on a somewhat different footing. These were hilly areas which for various, economic and other reasons were of great importance to Travancore Cochin. The percentage of Tamil speaking people in Devikulam and Peermedetaluks was 72 and 44 respectively.

Considering their area which was about 12% of the whole area of Travancore-Cochin State, Devikulam and Peermedetaluks had comparatively a meager population. Although much of this population was originally migrant, it now constituted a majority. These were of great importance to Travancore - Cochin because electric works were situated here and they produced rubber. Even Tamilnad Congress, which demanded a separate Tamilnad, recognised the importance of these areas to the Travancore Cochin Government. While considering this claim the S.R.C. observed that it did not regard linguistic principle as the only factor for reorganisation of any area. In these areas the majority of Tamil speaking people was only marginal. The Dar Commission had also reported that unless the majority of one language spoken in any area was at least 70% that area should be considered as bilingual. The S.R.C. agreed with this opinion did not recommend the creation of a Tamilnadu or the separation of these areas from Madras.

In giving a decision on Hyderabad, the commission also gave importance to the desire of the people of the Telangana area. There was an obvious advantage in having a larger state of VishelIndhra (Andhra and Telengeneeres of Hyderabad) but the people of Telangana area feared that they would not be benefitted by being united with the coastal Andhra. Therefore, to avoid any dissension, the commission thought it appropriate to give a sufficient period of five years for the people of Telangana to make up their minds. For the present it was thought appropriate to constitute a separate state of Hyderabad for the people of Telangana areas.

In Central India a large Hindi speaking state, Madhya Pradesh was recommended. The state had a significance in being a larger unit in Central India. The commission took into account the advantage of having

a compact, strong and prosperous unit in Central India. They proposed to separate the Marathi speaking district of Madhya Pradesh and to constitute it an independent unit. Many factors favored this decision particularly the financial prospects of this region ending the weight of public opinion. On the linguistic ground, these Marathi-speaking districts could also be integrated with Western Maharashtra such a demand was contended by those who supported the Sanyukta Maharashtra consisting of all the Marathi-speaking people. But the people of this area feared that the merger of this region with a larger Marathi-speaking state of SenyuktaMahersshre would impede their economic progress. The circumstances allowed the commission to report that Vidarbhe ought to be a separate Marathi-speaking state. Rejesthen could be constituted as one state in the Western part of Indie based on the language, tradition, and culture.

Some difficulty was encountered in resolving the disputes in certain border areas of some states. S.H.C. reported that the redrawing of the WestBengel - Bihar boundaries had been one of the most difficult problems with which it had faced. It was with special reference to the West Bengal - Bihar border disputes that the commission had further noted that “bilingualism” in some areas had to be accepted as an “inevitable fact” and that no great importance “could there,” be attached to mere linguistic affinity.”

S.R.C. Report emphasized the administrative aspect of the situation, “quite apart from” the historical claim of West Bengal and “its Psychological aspect”.

West Bengal Government claimed the Purnea and SanthalPergenes districts in the North. As regards the area which was to the South West Bengal had asked for the areas of the two rivers of the May and the Kasi. The state had planned for river control end irrigation development on a very large scale in its Burdwan division. This development it was claimed, would be helped by the transfer to West Bengal of a portion. of the SanthalParganas and the whole of Manbhum. On the other hand the Bihar Government advanced arguments in favour of the maintenance of the status quo and pointed out that “no great importance need be attached to geographical contiguity, in view of the fact that the constitution of India contains adequate provision to facilitate inter-state co-operation.” 1.

## Conclusion

The current case study of state reorganisation not only offers a causal justification for its need but also crucial insights into the overall problem of state reconstruction in India. Consequently, based on the results of the current study, the following policy recommendations can be made. First, Extrapolating from the current study, it is recommended that before any choice on restructuring is made anywhere in the nation, the Union Government take into account the historical specificities of regions. This case study makes it abundantly evident that ignoring or disregarding such subtleties can result in significant instability, which is harmful to the state’s residents’ capacity to live in peace and seriously impairs their chances of experiencing economic growth. Depending on whether they were a part of the former princely states or British presidencies, many sections of the country have seen extremely distinct political and developmental periods. By uniting them, it may be obvious that one will be in a superior position to the other, resulting in an imbalance of power.

Second, Although the present case study shows that language uniformity may not be enough on its own, it may be a strong unifying force. Any civilization or group of individuals has a strong attachment to its culture, values, and beliefs. Any violation of the same is viewed as an insult to both their culture and their very identity.

Third, whatever model of development a state choose, it is essential that it considers the desires of the disadvantaged groups as well as those of the rest of society. If the same is not taken into consideration, it will just exacerbate already-existing inequities and encourage discontent. The chances provided by the neoliberal paradigm favour urban, English-educated young, while for rural people, it results in the collapse of their traditional means of subsistence. This is important since states now have greater autonomy in making decisions about economic matters.

The guiding factor for reorganisation of states must be rationality and the best interests of the people of



the region/state in consonance with that of the country as a whole. Reorganisation is not a tool that political parties can use to boost their electoral success or further their own political agendas. It will be hard to differentiate between the British model of governance during the colonial period and that of a constitutional democracy that was established after independence if vested political interests are routinely served in the name of applying one criterion or the other for states reorganisation.

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