



The Demand for Separate Statehood in India: A Never Ending Challenge

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Abstract: The dawn of this new epoch saw the creation of three new states, namely, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. The recent statehood of Telengana intensify the problem and demand of separate statehood in India. In this context, this article tries to define the fundamental problem of demands for separate statehood in different parts of this nation throughout the history, since independence.

Keywords: Democracy, Federalism, Linguistic principle, Separate Statehood

One among the major challenge faced by the Indian state after becoming an independent country was the integration of Princely States. Even though the Government succeeded in attaching all the Princely states. But the problem remained always that is about the integration of regional units for realising the goal of National integration and development of nation. A number of states were created by the Indian state ever since its beginning on the basis of Language and other factors ethnic identity. The reorganisation of Indian states started in 1956 with the passing of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. It was a major milestone and it revised the boundaries of India's states and territories, organising them along linguistic lines. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed the States Reorganisation Commission in December 1953 for organising Indian states. The commission was headed by the retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Fazal Ali and its other two members were H. N. Kunzru and K. M. Panikkar¹. The Commission submitted its report on September 30, 1955, which recommended for the reorganisation of India's states. The first state in India which was formed on the basis of Language was Andhra Pradesh. Irony is in the fact that the last state in India formed was also by diving the same Andhra Pradesh. Thus if on the basis of Language or other, demand for creation of New states have been a never ending challenge for the Indian Union. Every region dreams of separate statehood. There are demands within states for separate statehood and identity. These demands are in most of the cases supported by Political Parties and leaders with parochial interests.

The State reorganisation act of 1956

Although a number of changes to India's regional boundaries have been made from 1956, the States Reorganization Act of 1956 still remains as the single most important event in determining the state boundaries since 1947.

1 . "Reorganisation of states" (PDF). *Economic Weekly*.

The Act came into effect along with the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, which also restructured the constitutional framework for India's existing states. It made changes in the provisions of Part I of the Constitution of India, Articles 3 & 4².

The British Indian Empire prior to Independence, included the present-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, then it included three types of territories. The Provinces of British India, which were governed by British officials responsible to the Governor-General of India; the Indian States, under the rule of native hereditary rulers who accepted British authority in return for their own power; and the smaller provinces which were governed by a chief commissioner directly appointed by the Governor-General. Major reforms initiated by the British Government also recognized the principle of federalism for Independent India. On 15 August 1947, British Government granted independence to India and Pakistan. The British also ended their treaty relations with more than five hundred native princely states. These native states were encouraged to join either India or Pakistan. However, in some cases an armed intervention was also needed to integrate the present day territories to India.

The Constitution of India, which was passed on November 26 and which came into force on 26 January 1950 declared India into a sovereign democratic republic. The new republic was also declared as a "Union of States". The constitution of 1950 identified three main types of states and a class of territories: Part A states, which were the former Governors' provinces of British India, were ruled by a Governor appointed by the President and an elected state Legislature. The nine Part A states were Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (formerly Central Provinces and Berar), Madras, Orissa, Punjab (formerly East Punjab), Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces), and West Bengal. Part B states, which were former princely states or groups of princely states, governed by a Rajpramukh, who was usually the ruler of a constituent state, and an elected legislature. The Rajpramukh was appointed by the President of India. The eight Part B states were Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Rajasthan, Saurashtra, and Travancore-Cochin. Part C states included both the former chief commissioners' provinces and some princely states, and each was governed by a chief commissioner appointed by the President of India. The ten Part C states were Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Cutch, Manipur, Tripura, and Vindhya Pradesh and the sole Part D territory was the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were administered by a lieutenant governor appointed by the central government.

Movement for creation of states on the basis on Language

The demand for creation of states on a linguistic basis were there even before Indian independence from the British rule. The first movement of this kind of linguistic movement started in 1895 in Odisha. The movement gained momentum later and they demanded creation of a separate Orissa Province, which has to be formed by bifurcating the Bihar and Orissa Provinces. It was due to the efforts of

2 . <https://www.india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/constitution-india-full-text>

Madhusudan Das³, who is considered as the Father of Odia nationalism that the movement eventually achieved its objective. In 1936 Orissa Province became the first Indian state in the pre-independence period to be organised on the basis of common language.

The post-independence period witnessed the increase in the number of political movements for the creation of new states crafted on linguistic lines. The movement to create a Telugu-speaking state out of the northern portion of Madras State gathered momentum in the years after independence. The movement was the first of its kind in the post independent period which achieved its objective. In 1953, the sixteen northern Telugu-speaking districts of Madras State became the new State of Andhra. Potti Sreeramulu became famous for undertaking a hunger strike in support for the creation of a state for the Telugu speaking people of Madras Presidency. He lost his life in this process. Commenting on Sreeramulu's dedication and fasting ability, Gandhiji once said, "If only I have eleven more followers like Sreeramulu I will win freedom in a year." His death resulted in public rioting and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared his decision to create Andhra State three days after the death of Sreeramulu⁴.

The existing demands for creation of new states in India

Starting from that period there emerged many more demands for the creation of many more states. This has been an unending challenge faced by the Indian state since 1956. In 1956 the reorganisation created 14 states and 6 Union territories. But one can see that the number of states has doubled in this short period after independence. At present there are demands for creation of states like:

1. Harit Pradesh by dividing western part of Uttar Pradesh including Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Meerut, Moradabad, and Saharanpur. Harit Pradesh or Pashchim Pradesh & Pashchimanchal is a demanded new state of India comprising the western parts of Uttar Pradesh. Harit means Green which implies the agricultural prosperity of the region. The region has distinct demographic, economic and cultural patterns that are different from other parts of UP, and it resembles Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan states more than UP.
2. Purvanchal or Eastern Uttar Pradesh which is demanded for Bhojpuri speaking people. Purvanchal is a geographic region in northern India, it comprises of eastern end of Uttar Pradesh and western end of Bihar, where Hindi and its dialect Bhojpuri are the used languages. It is has Nepal in the north, Bihar to the east, Bagelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh to the south, the Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh to the west. Largest market hub of Purvanchal is the holy city Varanasi.
3. Bodoland in Assam is demanded for the bodo people. the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD), is an autonomous territory consisting of areas located in the extreme north near the Brahmaputra river, within the state of Assam by the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. The region is mostly inhabited by the indigenous Bodo people. The official map of Bodoland includes four districts of BTAD

3 . <https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/odisha/born-of-linguistic-pride/cid/408785>

4 . *Fast and Win*. Time, 29 December 1952.

recognised by the Government of India. It is administered by the Bodoland Territorial Council now.

4. Saurashtra (Southern Gujarat) is demanded by local groups in Southern Gujra. They wish to create a new state as this area is totally under developed compared to the rest of the state. This demand is almost same as in the case of Telangana which was demanded for solving this problem of regional disparity⁵. Saurashtra is also known as Sorath or Kathiawar. It is a peninsular region of Gujarat, located on the Arabian Sea coast. It covers one third of Gujarat state, including Rajkot District.

5. Ladakh (Eastern Jammu & Kashmir) is demanded by the Buddhists in the state of J&K. The present Government had committed creation of new state in their Election Manifesto. But owing to external compulsions like that from the UNO, this demand has not been realised. Ladakh is the land of high passes is a region in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Its borders are the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram range to the main Great Himalayas to the south. It is mainly inhabited by people of Indo-Aryan and Tibetan descent. It is one of the most least populated regions in Jammu and Kashmir. Their culture and history closely resembles that of Tibet.

6. Gorkhaland (Northern West Bengal) is a proposed state demanded by the Gorkha people. The movement for a separate state of Gorkhaland gained popularity during the 1980s, when a violent agitation was organised by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) under the leadership of Subhash Ghising. Gorkhaland is a demanded state by the people of the hill regions of District Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Duars area. They demand creation of a separate state from the Indian state of West Bengal. The demand for a separate administrative system in Darjeeling has been in existence since 1909. In that year the Hillmen's Association of Darjeeling submitted a memorandum to Minto-Morley Reforms committee.

7. There have been demands for the creation of a separate state of Kongu Nadu (also called Kongadesam) comprising of the regions of western Tamil Nadu, parts of southern Karnataka and central-east Kerala with its headquarters at Coimbatore⁶. It mostly comprises of western part of Tamil Nadu. In the ancient Tamil history, it was the capital of the Chera kings.

8. Creation of Vidarbha state is also in demand. It includes a region that comprises of Amravati and Nagpur divisions of eastern Maharashtra. Vidarbha is the eastern region of Maharashtra. Amravati division's former name is Berar. It occupies 31.6% of the total area of the State and includes 21.3% of Maharashtra's total population. It borders are Madhya Pradesh in the north, Chhattisgarh in the east, Telangana in the south and Marathwada and Khandesh regions of Maharashtra in the west. Situated in central India, Vidarbha has its unique cultural and historical background distinct from rest of the state. The largest city in Vidarbha is Nagpur followed by Amravati. A majority of Vidarbhians speak Varhadi and Zadi dialects of Marathi.

Conclusion

The above said cases are some of the important demands for separate state hood in India. Why this occurs in a state which was reorganised many times on the

5 . <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/call-to-revive-movement-for-separate-saurashtra-state/articleshow/21536911.cms>

6 . https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kongu_Nadu

basis of linguistic, ethnic or other parochial interests have to be seriously thought of. Once a demand is fulfilled it results in the creation of more states. This is a never ending process in India. Article 3 of the Indian constitution provides constitutional support for the creation of new states by the parliament⁷. It has to be noted that it is very easy for the parliament to amend the boundaries and names of a States in India. In India it can be done by the parliament with simple majority in parliament and without the consent of the existing states. Thus according to the whims and fancies of Political leaders and political parties this is done in India in a routine matter. This is not a positive trend. Most of these demands are articulated by regional political parties in India. Regional parties in India do exhibit more regional and parochial interests than national interest and outlook. Hence it remains always a challenge to national unity and progress of the country. Demand for new states start with political violence in most of the cases and once this demand is sanctioned and a new state is created, it adversely affects the public exchequer. Thus all these parochial movements are definitely going to affect the social, political and economic advancement of our nation. When we are celebrating our Republic day, these issues have to be addressed and everyone should give importance to National Unity, National prosperity and Social inclusion more than narrow local issues.

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7 . <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/1858/Creation-of-New-States.html>