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# Linguistic Reorganization Of Indian States And The Role Of Jawaharlal Nehru After Independence

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## ABSTRACT

India is known as one geographical entity, but since the ancient period India never has been a homogeneous political entity. The provinces of India were not divided systematically under the British reign, so after the independence a systematic division of the provinces became the need of the situation for a smooth administration. For the division of the provinces the Linguistic cause was given prior importance along with the geographical, administrative as well as economic factors. In this paper we will study about the Formation of the Linguistic States in India after the country got independence. We will look into the role of the then Prime Minister of India in the formation of Linguistic States. After that we will study about the debate regarding the reorganization of the states. In the last part of the paper we will discuss about the consequence of the linguistic reorganization of Indian provinces by relating it with the present scenario of the country.

**Key Words** India, Linguistic States, State Reorganization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Nationalism in India is not something which is new; it has its root back in the early periods. In the first twenty years of independence the language issue came out as the most divisive one, this created a feeling of fear among many that the unity of the nation was in danger. Though the issue of Linguistic identity in a diverse nation like India always raises a question to the integrity of the nation, but during the freedom struggle the linguistic identity was actually constructing a national identity. In the 1951 Election Manifesto the Congress mentioned that the reorganization of the states will depend on the wishes of the people who are concerned. It was also mentioned that that along with the linguistic reasons, economic, Financial and administrative reasons will also be taken into account. After the formation of Indian Constitution the change in boundary of states was made for the first time in 1953. Andhra came out as the First Linguistic State of India, which was earlier a part of Madras Province. The demand for separate Andhra state was a very long and old demand. Thus with the formation of Andhra the reorganization of Indian Provinces on linguistic grounds started.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- To study about the Linguistic Formation of States in India
- To understand about the needs of the reorganization of States on the basis of language
- To analyze how much did the linguistic reorganization of states helped India in maintaining the Unity
- To Study the effects of such formation in the present political scenario

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study has been conducted mainly on the basis of the existing literature and secondary data information. The secondary data has been collected from different sources like-research papers published in journals, books, articles and survey reports etc. The study is descriptive in nature.

## **4. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS**

### **4.1. The Commissions for the Linguistic Reorganization of Indian States**

The demand for the formation of the Indian states on linguistic basis was not a new demand. In the pre Independence period Indian national congress also supported this demand. Even Nehru was also appreciative of the Indian linguistic diversity. But after independence and after the challenges of the partition of India, many leaders of that time including Nehru was reconsidering this issue. At that time all that they were concerned about was the unity of India. The integration of the state by combining various diversities with the political unity was the main focus.

After the Independence of India, the issue of the reorganization of state on the basis of language reached its peak. To examine this issue the government appointed several commissions. In 1948 the government appointed a committee, named Dhar committee under the supervision of S.K. Dhar, a judge of Allahabad high court. But this commission favored the reorganization of states on the basis of administrative convenience and postponed the linguistic basis. In December, 1948 the Congress appointed another committee to examine the same issue, known as the JVP (Jawaharlal- Vallavbhai- Pattabhi) committee under Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallavbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. This commission also dismissed the linguistic issue. In 1953 as a result of Nehru's statement in the parliament regarding the formation of states another commission was formed, known as the – State Reorganization Commission. The Commission consisted three members, they were – Justice Fazal Ali, Dr. H.N.Kunzru and Dr. K.N.Pennikar. It was an independent Commission and was empowered to report on the boundary issues of the whole country.

Later, the government formed 14 states and 6 union territories on linguistic basis under the States Reorganization Act, 1956.

#### **4.2. Nehru's role in the Formation of Linguistic States**

The first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru faced a difficult task regarding the reorganization of the Indian states. Nehru was a statist as well as a critical modernist. Nehru had a sense of public morality and ethical politics. He tried to combine morality with politics. He wanted a democratic and rational state. Nehru was concerned regarding the preservation of the pluralist secular character of the Indian society. He was also upset with the politicization of language, particularly since 1930s. At that time, Nehru believed that language should not become a fundamental basis for creating a separate state. Nehru and leaders like Sardar Patel felt that linguistic divisions would weaken India's unity. He also resisted the imposition of Hindi as the only national language. Nehru was afraid of the linguistic breakup of the state. That's why he considered keeping English for 15 years after 1950. Nehru feared that any redrawing of the India's internal boundaries would further endanger the country's unity and integrity. Though Nehru gave greatest importance to language but he believed that the reorganization of the states should be on the basis of administrative, economic, linguistic or other convenient governance grounds. Even in the section 86 of the Nehru Report, mentioned that "The redistribution of provinces should take place on a linguistic basis on the demand of the majority of the population of the area concerned, subject to financial and administrative considerations". All these give us an idea about Nehru's dilemma on the formation of linguistic states.

But after a period of several years Nehru started to revise his views regarding the linguistic issue. It was mainly because of the agitations and the protests from several parts of India, which were in fact turning into violence. Nehru always had concerns for the minority communities, may it be religious or linguistic minority. As he believed that, the majority always has the power to crush the minority. Similarly in this issue also, Nehru stated that in the linguistic states the concerns of the minority should also be considered. Nehru did not favor the principle of linguism in totality. Nehru was influenced by the linguistic reconstruction programme of Russia. Where, Lenin the leader of communist party wanted the use of mother tongue for educational purposes. There, in Russia more than 50 languages without script were given scripts and also, many scientific and practical measures were taken to ensure the realization and protection of these languages. Similarly Nehru also thought that the reorganization would ensure that every one will be educated in the language of the state. In his later part of life Nehru himself admitted about his initial fear and confusions regarding the future of linguistically reorganized states of independent India.

Nehru also faced criticism for his confusions and also for being dilatory in the linguistic states' issue.

### **4.3 The debates regarding the reorganization of Indian States**

India is known as a vast country in its area and a diverse country in its culture, religion or language. India is facing many problems in the present situation, but of all the problems the national integrity is one of the major. Drawing and redrawing of the state boundaries of India has been a very old issue and yet we can't say that the demand for new states end already as it is continuing till today. The debate regarding the reorganization of states among the scholars, politicians as well as masses continues till today. Many argue that the reorganization of the state will create a threat to the national integrity and unity. While those who favor the reorganization argue that such reorganization of the states is necessary in a democratic country like India, as it implies listening to the aspirations and demands of the people. They also hold that creating smaller states will ensure decentralization which will lead to effective and efficient administration. They also believe that it will promote a greater democracy where the culturally and linguistically diverse groups will get space to economic as well as political fields. While, those who argues that the reorganization of the states will create a threat to national integrity says that such reorganization into smaller states can create a situation which can lead to excessive regionalism.

The linguistic reorganization of the states resolved the problem for that time. It did not affected the federal structure of the nation or weaken the centre. Some scholars even argue that the formation of the states on the basis of language was the only possible way for maintaining the national unity. During the British period, in 1912 the creation of Bihar as a separate province also shows that even the British Government in India recognized that language and culture could be the possible grounds for reorganizing the states. But, we can't say that the linguistic reorganization of Indian states resolved all the problems related to linguistic conflicts or the disputes over boundaries. As demands for separate states are heard even today, even within the states which were formed on the basis of language. Such incidents show that the demand for smaller states that is arising these days are neither a repudiation of the principle of linguistic States nor is it a logical sequel to it. The demands for Bodoland, Uttarakhand, Gorkhaland etc shows that the demand for smaller states are now not only on the basis of language. There are many other reasons behind it. May the reason behind this be vote bank politics or may lack of importance from the centre's side, unequal redistribution of resources or there can be other reasons as well.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

India is a diverse country consisting various languages, religion, culture etc. After years of fights for independence and then the partition of the country into – India and Pakistan created a situation of great challenge for the country. After that the main motive of the leaders became the maintenance of the unity and integrity of the country. Therefore the nation builders at that time found the reorganization of the states by giving importance to the linguistic diversity as the way to maintain the ‘unity in diversity’ of the country. The reorganization of the states helped in maintaining the democratic values of India, it maintained the decentralization as well as minority representation. However the reorganization of the states didn’t solve the problems of the nation. The demands for new states give the proof of it. Now the demands for new states are not solely based on language, many more factors got add to it. Thus, the above discussion shows that, language is important but just language isn’t enough to create a state. As the linguistic states idea failed in the Andhra Pradesh case, where they combined the people with same language but different lifestyle, and today the state again got divided into two different states. Thus, in this context of rising demand for independent separate states, the question arises that is there again a need for state reorganization commission? Does this prove that Nehru’s confusion or dilemma regarding this issue was justifiable? Several questions like this still arise regarding the reorganization of the Indian states.

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