

FIRST STATE REORGANISATION COMMISSION: LANGUAGE AS A CRITERION FOR FORMATION OF STATES

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The aim is to find out the significance of language while formation of new states. It includes a slight backdrop to the debate on reorganising states on the basis of linguistic criteria vis-à-vis other criteria as well and at the same time giving a little platform to the 'language' making it the most important of all. Further, the research project is to evaluate whether language is still considered as a criterion for new states as well.

The topic i.e. "First State Reorganisation Commission: Language as a criterion for formation of states" has been selected keeping in mind the linguistic diversity among the population of India, during the time of pre- independence to the contemporary times. The study throws a light on the importance of language and culture of the population and how can state efficiency be achieved if people of same linguistics are clubbed together. Further, the project is also important from the point of view that it explores other area for reorganisation, which are also discussed in the first state reorganisation commission report i.e. culture, efficiency, economic conditions, etc. and tries to probe to what extent can these facts be held useful apart from language as a sole criterion. The topic covers study on language being the most important criteria while reorganising state and how does it contradict with other factors as well. It tries to cover all the important elements taken into account by Fazl Ali Commission or the first state reorganisation commission while forming of new states.

INTRODUCTION

The first state reorganisation commission report was released on 30th September 1955 under the chairmanship of Justice Fazal Ali. The other two members of the commission were H.M Kunzru and K.M Pannikar. Even before the commission's report came into recognizance of the government, there were many linguistic conflicts that were prevalent from time before independence. It all started with extremist leader Lokmanya Tilak who appreciated the diversity of languages and advocated reorganisation of provinces on linguistic basis. An excerpt from Kesari he wrote in 1869¹:

"The present administrative division of India is the result of a certain historical process and in some cases purely result of accident... if they are replaced by units formed on a linguistic

¹ K. Veeriah. "Question of Linguistic States". People's Democracy (weekly organ of communist party of India) Vol. 34; No. 3. (January 17, 2010)

basis, each of them will have some measure of homogeneity and will provide encouragement to the people and languages of the respective regions.”

Earlier bifurcation of Bengal by colonialists was done on religious basis i.e. Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims. However due to this force from common masses, it had to undo the same and made Assam and Bihar separate provinces in 1911. Language was yet to receive that important status when came to administration and self government until 1920, when Gandhi emerged as a supreme leader. Seeing the linguistic agitation among the people, and announcement of congress made in 1927 session about “redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis”, the colonial administration had to appoint Simon commission headed by sir John Simon to take up the above said matter. However, it refused the principle of linguistic segregation of provinces. Later, it was after the Nehru committee report that Odisha became first state on linguistic principle pre independence.

After independence, creation of Andhra as a new state on linguistic basis itself called to many debates in the constituent assembly where it announced formation of separate committee to inquire into the demands of linguistic states. It was after this that Dhar commission and several other commissions came into existence to determine formation of states on linguistic basis. Finally, after State Reorganization commission or Fazal Ali Commission, when State Reorganisation Act was passed.

IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE BEING THE CRITERIA FOR REORGANISATION OF STATES

India has been a mixture of various languages since early past. It has witnessed growth of both the cultures, religions in its early past. The debates on ‘linguistic fanaticism’ date back to the era of Modern India, i.e. during the time of great freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi. Even before independence, congress stood with the decision of separating Indian states on the ground of language. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, at the prayer meeting on January 25, 1948, five days before the assassination, “The Congress had decided some 20 years ago. That there should be as many provinces in the country as there are major languages.” It can be followed here that the Constituent Assembly was worried with the issue of etymological states in India. Among the significant issues, wrangled in the Constituent Assembly was the etymological division of India, something Nehru stood up to. After freedom again Political developments for the production of new, etymological based states created. The Congress-drove Government got to be worried that the states framed exclusively on a semantic premise may be inadmissible, and may even represent a hazard to the national solidarity. This dread was produced fundamentally because of division of India. Then came Dhar Commission with its report², which said, “the formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic considerations is not in the larger interests of the Indian nation”. Further, The commission solicited the administration from India to revamp the states on the premise of ‘geographical continuity, financial self-

² The Dar Commission Report, 10th December, 1946

sufficiency, administrative convenience and capacity for future development'. After this non-linguistic point of view was shared, JVP committee was formed which in its report³ stated, "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we, as democrats, have to submit to it, but subject to certain limitations in regard to the good of India as a whole." After many debates and discussion held on the same, finally, State Reorganisation Commission or Fazl Ali Commission was formed according to which, "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 interest of our national unity."⁴

LINGUISTIC AREA NOT JUST INCLUDES LANGUAGE

In chapter three of the report of the First state reorganisation commission, language and culture has been discussed widely as a factor of reorganising states. "One of the major facts of India's political evolution during the last hundred years has been the growth of our regional languages". The demand for linguistic States does not represent mere cultural revivalism. It has a wider purpose in that it seeks to secure for different linguistic groups political and economic justice. The political atmosphere, vitiated by linguistic differences, has now permeated into the administrative structure as a whole. Important administrative posts tend to become the monopoly of the members of dominant language groups and appointments and promotions are no longer governed by considerations of administrative purity, efficiency and fairness. Thus, linguistic area not just includes, but there are several other elements that get affected.

LANGUAGES AS A CONSIDERATION FOR NEW STATES

The political climate, vitiated by etymological contrasts, has now pervaded into the regulatory structure in general. Imperative regulatory presents tend on turn into the imposing business model of the individuals from overwhelming dialect gatherings and arrangements and advancements are no more administered by contemplations of managerial immaculateness, effectiveness and reasonableness. The expanding interest for new states brings up various issues with respect to the prosperity of India's government fair nation. This study is being directed by the specialist to explore into the requests for the formation of new states on phonetic premise in India and the Parliaments energy to do as such. "One of the most difficult problems in the framing of India's new Constitution', wrote B.N Rau, 'will be to satisfy the demand for linguistic provinces and other demands of a like nature.'⁵

CONCLUSION

³ The JVP Committee Report, 1st April, 1949

⁴ Part II of Report of the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) 1955, titled "Factors Bearing on Reorganization"

⁵ Rau, Constitutional Precedents, First Series, pg.17

The protected arrangement under Article 3 was fused with a kind thought to acknowledge geological and financial unification of India yet now it appears that this arrangement has turned into a device for fulfilling territorial and phonetic yearnings of individuals and an instrument to accomplish appointive increases. The two terms "LINGUISTIC" and "CULTURAL" have never been more abused than as of late. It is hard to comprehend what has happened to our energy of digestion and why the sentiment etymological and provincial devotion is making progress step by step. The expanding interest for new states evidently shows this propensity springing up in our nation and sadly by making more expresses, our administration has encourage heightened the issue. Beneficiary claim state as though state is only a toy that could be taken care of and adjusted by. And the majority of this is being done for the sake of Linguistic division to bolster the improvement of the state and guarantee better administration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the front of rearrangement of states, a steady balkanisation of the nation ought not be energized, as that would overcome the preambular order of and our tenacious journey for 'national trustworthiness.' The need of great importance is to focus more on advancement of the states effectively existing. It is irrelevant whether the state is little or enormous; what is required is a solid political will to oversee with full trustworthiness and earnestness. Improvement requires a favourable climate to be made by both; pioneers and residents and not division of states on the cases of helping the advancement of the states. No new state should be created on linguistic basis. This will put a keep an eye on the escalating provincial and phonetic governmental issues. Infact "Dhar Commission" named by the legislature of India in 1948 to look at the association of the segments of Indian union completely dismisses the premise of etymological organization of state. In any case, legislative issues beat intelligence and states were made are as yet being made on phonetic and social grounds. No new state under Article 3 ought to be made on the premise just that lion's share tenant of the proposed new state talk a specific religion or take after a specific culture or purport a specific religion.