

CHAPTER II

LINGUISTIC REORGANIZATION OF INDIAN STATES

The principle of linguistic provinces had no precedent in the history of India. The boundaries of the states changed in accordance with the changing strength and abilities of the kings. Under the British, the question of linguistic reorganization of provinces received scant attention. Imperial consideration of administrative convenience was the guiding principle. The linguistic principle was used in an opportunistic manner. The provinces represented the administrative conveniences and legacy of their conquests. The East India Company had originally acquired territories near Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Additional territorial acquisition was placed under the newly created provinces. Many of the provinces were multi-lingual units. The Bombay province consisted of Gujarati, Marathi and Kannada speaking people. The Madras province consisted of Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam speaking regions. Bengal once consisted of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa territories.¹

The demand for linguistic states was not new but it emerged for the first time in 1874 during British regime, when Sylhet was transferred from Bengal to Assam. The people of Sylhet protested against this transfer on the ground that they formed a part of Bengali-speaking group; hence their demand for re-union with Bengal is genuine. In 1876, the Oriya speaking people also demanded for a separate state on the basis of language.² From

¹ S.H. Patil, *The Congress Party and Princely States*, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1981, p.154.

² V. Venkat Rao, "The Political Map of India", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2, April-June 1956, p.180.

1876 to 1902, two memoranda were submitted to the government requesting to bring all Oriya speaking people together under a single administrative unit. Bal Gangadhar Tilak also supported this demand for the sake of the homogeneity and development of the people. In the Marathi-language newspaper Kesari 'The Lion' which he edited, Tilak wrote on November 17, 1891, "The present administrative division of India is the result of a certain historical process and in some cases is exclusively the result of chance circumstances... If it is replaced by a system of administrative units created on a linguistic basis, each of them will be to some degree homogeneous and will facilitate the development of the people and the languages of the respective people".³

The demand for the unification of ethnic territories made its presence felt in 1896 by the Biharis, the Hindi speaking people of Bengal. The assertion of this demand was formed in Orissa in 1902 and in Assam in 1905.⁴ In 1903, the Utkal Union Conference was formed to carry on the agitation for a separate Oriya province.⁵ Home Secretary in the Central Government, Sir Herbert Risley, in 1903, also pointed out the disadvantage of multi-lingual provinces.⁶ The same opinion was expressed by the Royal Commission on Decentralization.

Bengal, however, was partitioned on administrative and linguistic ground by Lord Curzon, the Governor General of India in 1905. The real motive behind the partition was not the language but to divide Hindu-Muslim

³ Robert D. King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.59.

⁴ Boris, I. Kluvyev, *India: National and Language Problem*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1981, p.121.

⁵ S.H. Patil, *op.cit.*, p.155.

⁶ B. L. Fadia, *State Politics in India*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1984, p.45; V. Venkat Rao, *op.cit.*, p.177.

unity and to curtail the political influence of the Bengal people.⁷ In 1911, after a wide spread agitation by the nationalists, the government had to annul the partition. In the Government of India Despatch, August 25, 1911, Lord Harding had also desired for the linguistic consideration of the provinces. Lord Harding's letter to the Secretary of State for India proposing the annulment of Bengal Partition sought to justify the proposal on linguistic basis.⁸ In 1912, Bengal was bifurcated making three more provinces; Bihar, Orissa and Assam and their boundaries were fixed on linguistic basis.⁹

The Telugu people had been holding conferences to demand a separate Andhra Province since 1913. The Kannada people also had been demanding a separate Karnataka province since 1916 under the auspices of various organizations like Karnataka Vidya Vardhak Sangha and Kikarana Sabha.¹⁰ Lionel Curtis of Round Table group and the father of Dyarchy, who came to India during First World War, also recommended for the redrawing of the provinces on linguistic ground for better self-governing. Curtis argued that the development of self-government is possible only when the vernacular of the province is adopted as the means of transacting governmental business.¹¹ The same opinion was expressed by the joint address presented by the Britishers and Indians to the Secretary of State, Mr. Montague. On his recommendations, the Montague Chelmsford Report recognized the need for reconstituting the provinces on the basis of language; as such reorganization would result in simplification in administration, homogeneity, more self-government and democracy. It

⁷ J. R. Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p.660.

⁸ K. R. Bombwall, *Indian Constitution and Administration*, Ambala Cantonment: Modern Publishers, 1970, p.236.

⁹ J. R. Siwach, *op.cit.*, p.660.

¹⁰ S. H. Patil, *op.cit.*, p.155.

¹¹ B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. I (1885-1935), Delhi: S. Chand and Company 1969, p. 152.

favoured linguistic units because this would enable the legislature to conduct their business in the vernacular.¹² In 1915-16 the Andhra Conference asked the Congress Party to recognize the linguist principle and to grant Andhra a separate status in the administration of Congress affairs. Both Gandhi and Annie Besant opposed the proposal.¹³ V. Srinivasa Shastri had also favoured linguistic provinces in his statement on February 6, 1918.¹⁴

The two debates which were held in the Indian Legislative Council in 1918 and 1920 also illustrated that an atmosphere had been created in different parts of India for the redrawing of provincial boundaries on a linguistic basis. The debate held in 1918 followed a motion by B.N. Sharma, who later became a member of the Governor-Generals' Executive Council. In moving his resolution, Sharma argued in favour of breaking up all the composite provinces e.g. Madras, Bombay and Central Province. Even Surendernath Bannerjee who opposed the resolution on the ground of its being inopportune had to admit that reconstitution of provinces would help in the right implementation of the purposes of self-government. The debate of 1920 was restricted to the question of amalgamation of all Oriya speaking people in one administrative unit. The telegrams, which the then leader of Orissa sent to the Legislative Council, read: "Oriya people bleeding in dismemberment". This telegram would indicate the way the people felt about the need of provincial reorganization on linguistic basis.¹⁵

¹² *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1918, Para 247, p.159.

¹³ K. Kodesia, *The Problem of Linguistic States in India*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1969, p.4.

¹⁴ S. V. Desikachar, *Reading in the Constitutional History of India, 1757-1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983, p.543.

¹⁵ N. C. Roy, "The Growth of Linguistic States in the Indian Federation," in S.P. Aiyar and Usha Mehta (eds.), *Essays on Indian Federalism*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1965, p.216.

The outline scheme of 'Swaraj' of Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Bhagwan Das declared in 1922, that "provinces should be demarcated on the linguistic basis. And the provinces which are too large may be divided into smaller units".¹⁶ In 1926, U.Ramaraao moved a motion in the Council of States suggesting the appointment of a committee for the formation of Karnataka province. In the same year, Sankaren Nair moved another motion for the formation of Tamil province. In 1927, Ramadoss Pantulu moved a motion in the Council of State for the formation of Andhra.¹⁷

The Muslim League made similar efforts and succeeded in separating Sind from Bombay and North West East Provinces (NWEP) from the Punjab. In 1927, the Simon Commission announced that the Government was not willing to accept language as the only criteria for the definition of provincial boundaries. It also listed several other factors. But inspite of the hostility of the public, the Commission published a report in which it supported linguistic redistribution of the provinces. The Indian Statutory Commission, presided over by John Simon, after examining the question in detail, could give only partial support to the principle of linguistic redistribution of provinces. It submitted its recommendations on the future Constitution of India in a two-volume report in 1930. In volume two of the Report, it pointed out that community of language was not the only factor in the organization of administrative provinces. Race, religion, economic interest, geographical contiguity, as due balance between country and town and between coastline and interior should all be taken into account as relevant factors. In view of all these complexities the Commission stated

¹⁶ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.5

¹⁷ V. Venkat Rao, *op.cit.*, p.180.

that, "it is manifestly impossible for us to recommend a redrawing of the map of India according to some new pattern."¹⁸ In Para 38, vol. II of its report, the Commission observed: "If those who speak the same language form a compact and self-contained area so situated and endowed as to be able to support its existence as a separate province, there is no doubt the use of a common speech is a strong and natural basis for provincial individuality."¹⁹

It was on this basis that the O' Donnell Committee was appointed in September 1931 to examine the case for the creation of Orissa. The Committee also endorsed this approach. The Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1933-34, however, in recommending the formation of a new Sind Province gave greater measure of support to this principle.²⁰ On the eve of elections in 1935, the Sapru Report, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Justice Party, the Radical Democratic Party, all endorsed the scheme of linguistic province.²¹ After Government of India Act 1935, the provinces of Orissa and Sind were created in 1936 on the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee.²² The setting up of Orissa in 1936 is an example of British acceptance of the linguistic principle for states; though this was not granted because of a people's movement, but by considerations of administrative expediency in Bengal province. After the creation of these provinces the movements for creating new provinces on linguistic basis started among Andhras, Kannadiyas and Malayalies. But the government

¹⁸ N. C. Roy, *op.cit.*, p.217.

¹⁹ K.R. Bombwall, *op.cit.*, p.236.

²⁰ M.V. Pylee, *Constitutional Government in India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1968, p.167.

²¹ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.8.

²² V. Venkat Rao, *op.cit.*, p.178.

did not attempt to create provinces on linguistic basis. Even the new provinces were bifurcated on communal basis and not on linguistic basis.

With the spread of education during British period, attachment of people to the regional languages also increased. This was a contributory factor for demanding separate linguistic provinces.

ATTITUDE OF THE CONGRESS PARTY (INC) BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

The Indian National Congress also from time to time supported the demand for creation of provinces on linguistic basis. For the first time it supported such demand when it backed the annulling of the partition of Bengal in 1905.²³ With the support of the Congress the Andhradesa Movement started in 1913. In 1915, Andhra Conference asked the Congress to grant it a separate status in the organization of the Congress Party.²⁴ Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the official Congress historian, tried at the 1915 session of the Congress to move a resolution for the linguistic reorganization of the Congress, but many congress leaders, particularly those from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, looked upon this resolution as an attempt to create disruption. The resolution was ruled out for want of time. The people of Andhra again raised the question of linguistic reorganization at the Lucknow Congress of 1916, but without any success. The success came in the next session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1917.

The leaders of the Indian National Congress were looking for an Indian language to take the place of English, so that the propaganda of the Congress could reach the people. In 1916, as a first step in this direction

²³ M.V. Pylee, *op.cit.*, p.167.

²⁴ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.4.

Congress formed the Provincial Congress Committees for different regions to support the demand for creation of provinces on linguistic ground.²⁵ Such Provincial Committees had already been formed for Bihar in 1908 and then for Sind and Andhra in 1918. Indian National Congress in its Calcutta Session in 1917, directly made an official statement in favour of it. Though, Gandhi and Annie Besant opposed the idea of forming separate Pradesh Congress Committees, however, Tilak supported the demand. According to Sitaramayya, the subject was hotly debated for two hours in the Subject Committee. The division of opinion in the Congress in 1917 was not typical, this ambivalence continued even after independence.²⁶ It was only in 1918 that Gandhi also accepted this demand. He placed the language issue at the heart of the independence movement. "It is my humble but firm opinion," he said in 1918, "that unless we give Hindi its national status and the provincial languages their new place in the life of the people, all talk of Swaraj is useless."²⁷ At Nagpur Session in 1920, he commented in favour of this acceptance. In 1920, the Congress passed a resolution on the formation of linguistic provinces in India, with a view to bring the people speaking the same language together and thus ushering in participatory democracy. Jinnah supported the Andhra claim for a separate 'provincehood'. It was only C. Rajagopalachari who till the end opposed the formation of Andhra province and later on the formation of linguistic provinces in general. The Communist movement went all out for supporting the linguistic claims.²⁸

²⁵ Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. I (1885-1935), Bombay: Padma Publications, 1946, p.147.

²⁶ Karat Prakash, *Language and the Nationality in India*, Bombay: Orient Longman, 1973, pp. 32-33.

²⁷ Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1972, p.270.

²⁸ Kandadai Seshadri, *Studies in Indian Polity*, New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1986, pp. 197-198.

The Constitution of the Congress was recast and the Congress Party organised its administrative structure on the basis of linguistic units as a result of the resolution. The new constitution of the Congress created twenty-one Provincial Congress Committees (Congress Provinces), two city provinces for Delhi and Bombay and a separate province for Burma, which was the part of greater India.²⁹ The constitution (resolution) mentioned the following linguistic provinces: 1) Madras 2) Andhra 3) Karnataka 4) Kerala 5) Bombay 6) Maharashtra 7) Gujarat 8) Sind 9) United Provinces 10) Punjab 11) North-West Frontier Provinces 12) Delhi 13) Ajmer-Merwara and Rajasthan 14) Central Provinces with Hindustani as the main language 15) Central provinces with Marathi as the main language 16) Berar 17) Bihar 18) Utkal 19) Bengal and the valley of Surma 20) Assam 21) Burma.³⁰

With the change in the constitution of the Congress, it provided opportunities for the people of the provinces and the states (princely) belonging to various linguistic groups to share increasing identity of interests in the linguistic and cultural fields. Many linguistic associations were formed and the Congressmen from the provinces took greater interest in the struggle for responsible government in the states of their regional languages. For example, the people of North Karnataka of the Bombay province took greater interest in the affairs of the Kannada speaking states like Ramdurg, Jamkhandi, Savanur, Mysore etc. Thus, the Congress created its linguistic circles covering the whole of India and gave an organic concept of India organized on a rational basis. The linguistic redistribution of India became the political objective of the Congress.³¹

²⁹ S.H. Patil, *op.cit.*, p.156.

³⁰ Karat Prakash, *op.cit.*, p.33.

³¹ S.H. Patil, *op.cit.*, p.157.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) in its 42nd session in Madras on December 26 to 28, 1927, adopted a resolution stating:

1. That with regard to the proposal that Sind should be constituted into a separate province, this committee is of the opinion that the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis-a principle that has been adopted by the constitution of the Congress.
2. The Committee is also of the opinion that such readjustment of provinces be immediately taken in hand and that any province which demands, such reconstitution on linguistic basis be dealt with accordingly.
3. The Committee is further of the opinion that a beginning may be made by constituting Andhra, Sind and Karnataka into separate provinces.³²

The Congress pleaded with the Indian Statutory Commission in 1927, for the redistribution of the provinces on the linguistic basis beginning with the formation of the separate provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Utkal and Sind.³³ Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conference, 1928, also favoured this demand.³⁴ The Committee suggested that the two most important considerations in arranging provinces are the linguistic principle and the wishes of the majority of the people.³⁵ It pointed out that "the present distribution of provinces has no rational basis" and consequently

³² A.M. Zaidi, *INC: The Glorious Tradition*, Vol. 2, 1921-27, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1987, p.450; A.M. Zaidi and S.G. Zaidi, *The Encyclopedia of Indian National Congress*, Vol. 9, 1925-29, New Delhi: S. Chand, 1981, p.242.

³³ S.H. Patil, *op.cit.*, p.157.

³⁴ *Report of Nehru Committee*, (All Parties Conference), Allahabad, General Secretary, All India Congress Committee (AICC,) 1928, p. 61.

³⁵ S.V. Desikachar, *op.cit.*, p.547.

there should be a redistribution of provincial territories.³⁶ In page 62 of its Report, it observed: "Here it becomes most desirable for the provinces to be regrouped on linguistic basis. Language, as a rule, corresponds with a special variety of culture, traditions and literature...."³⁷ "In a linguistic area all these factors will help in the general progress of the province."³⁸ The Report further added:

If a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must be necessarily a linguistic area. If it happens to be a polyglot area, difficulties will continually arise and the media of instruction and work will be in two or even more languages. Hence, it becomes most desirable for provinces to be ground on a linguistic basis. Language as a whole corresponds with a special literature. In a linguistic area all these factors will help in the general progress of the provinces.³⁹

The Congress laid down in the 'Karachi Rights' of 1931 that the culture, language and scripts of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas should be protected.⁴⁰ The Congress election manifesto in 1935 declared:

The Congress had stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, men or women... it has stood for the

³⁶ N. C. Roy, *op.cit.*, p.216.

³⁷ K.R. Bombwall, *op.cit.*, p.236.

³⁸ *Report of Nehru Committee*, *op.cit.*, p.62.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.62; K. Kodesia *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

⁴⁰ Granville Austin, *op. cit.*, p.287.

freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be considered, as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis.⁴¹

The Congress reaffirmed the linguistic principle in its sessions in 1937 (Calcutta) and again in 1938 (Wardha), with an assurance to the delegates of Andhra and Kerala that after coming to power, it would carry out a reorganization of provinces on the basis of language. Haripura Congress Working Committee (in 1938) passed the following resolution:

Having heard the views of the deputation of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (PCC), the Andhra Mahasabha, the Karnataka Unification Committee, the Karnataka PCC and the Kerala PCC on the question of the realization of provinces in India on a linguistic basis for administrative purpose, this committee declares that the resolutions of the Madras Legislature on linguistic province were passed with the previous sanction of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and the full approval of the Committee. The Committee desires to assure the people of the area concerned that the solution of this question would be undertaken as a part of the future scheme of the Government of India as soon as the Congress has the power to do so and call upon the people of these areas to resist from any further

⁴¹ K. Kodesia, *op.cit*, p.8.

agitation in this regard which may divert attention from the main issue now before the country.⁴²

The Congress, after this, in its every session and election manifesto of 1945-46, reiterated its pledge to set up the linguistic provinces.⁴³ In 1945, however, there occurred a slight change in the Congress policy in regard to this question for the sake of the security, stability and the integration of the country.⁴⁴

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE LINGUISTIC REORGANIZATION OF STATES

When the Constituent Assembly was formed in 1946, again the demand popped up for the creation of states on linguistic basis. Conventions and movements started in various parts of the country. A day before the first session of the Constituent Assembly a conference was held under Pattabhi Sitaramayya to pressurize this demand.⁴⁵ Madras Legislative Assembly through its resolution and the All India League of Linguistic Provinces (which met at Bezwada on May 13, 1947 and was presided over by Radha Kumud Mukerji) stressed to accept the principle of linguistic provinces.⁴⁶ There was, however, a slight change in the attitude of the Congress by the time the Constituent Assembly seriously started its work. Speaking in the Assembly (Legislature) in 1947, soon after the partition, Prime Minister Nehru, while conceding the linguistic principle remarked that, "first things must come first and the first thing is the security

⁴² Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2 (1935-1947), pp. 93-94.

⁴³ A. M. Zaidi and S. G. Zaidi, *op.cit.*, Vol. 13, p.98.

⁴⁴ K. R. Bombwall, *op.cit.*, pp.236-237.

⁴⁵ Nripendra Nath Mitra, *The Annual Register*, Vol. 2, Calcutta: Annual Register Office, 1946, p.53.

⁴⁶ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.9.

and stability of India".⁴⁷ After the Mountbatten Plan was announced the All India League of Linguistic Provinces demanded the formation of these new provinces with provisional boundaries as from the appointed day viz. 15 August, 1947 or at least an acceptance of the principle of linguistic provinces by the powers that be under the new Constitution of India.⁴⁸

The partition of India, however, on the ground of religion had shaken the leadership and therefore, they were scared that the demand for linguistic reorganization of India might lead to the growth of a number of different national communities and could add to the number of partitions whereas even the one that had taken place had been very painful and cruel. Maulana Azad was so much disturbed with the talk of linguistic provinces and other separatist tendencies that he recommended that the only way of maintaining Indian solidarity was to give a commanding position to the Centre in the new set up.⁴⁹ Nehru and Sardar Patel were also strongly opposed to the formation of linguistic provinces, fearing the weakening of the integration of the country.⁵⁰

In a speech on November 8, 1948, before the Constituent Assembly in support of B.R. Ambedkar's draft of the proposed Constitution, Nehru addressed language for the first time at length since Independence. Specific proposals on both major issues – linguistic provinces and the national language – were included in the draft of the Constitution under debate. Nehru spoke less to the merits of the constitutional proposals than to their timeliness:

⁴⁷ M. V. Pylee, *op.cit.*, pp. 167-168.

⁴⁸ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.10.

⁴⁹ O. P. Goyal, *India: Government and Politics*, New Delhi: Light and Life Publications, 1977, p.205.

⁵⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, 1949-53, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India 1954, pp. 54-62.

[I]t has long seemed to me inevitable that in India some kind of reorganization of the provinces should take place to fit in more with the cultural, geographical and economic condition of the people and with their desires. We have long been committed to it. I do not think it is good enough just to say linguistic provinces... [T]here are more important factors to be considered....⁵¹

It is not only Nehru and Patel but even Jaya Prakash Narayan, K.M. Munshi, B.R. Ambedkar and C. Rajagopalachari also rejected this demand.⁵² Gandhi opposing the move stated, "(Linguistic) redistribution should not militate against the organic unity of India. Autonomy does not and should not mean disruption, or that hereafter provinces could go the way they chose, independent of one another and of the Centre. If each province begins to look upon itself as a separate sovereign unit, India's independence will lose its meaning and with it will vanish the freedom of various units as well.... The world outside does not know us as Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Tamilians, etc., but only as Indians."⁵³ Gandhi wanted that before redistributing the states some preparatory work must be done, in other words the minds of the people must be 'Indianised'. Without such preliminary work mere clamouring for linguistic states must be condemned outright, for it sows the seeds of distrust and hatred amongst different language groups.⁵⁴ Though, later on, Gandhi had also supported the

⁵¹ Robert D. King, *op.cit.*, pp 104 -105.

⁵² K. M. Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. I (1902-1950) Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, 1967, p.227; *Constituent Assembly Debates* (Legislative) Nov. 27, 1947, pp.793-796.

⁵³ U. S. Mohan Rao, *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1968, p.70.

⁵⁴ K. Kodesia, *op.cit.*, p.180.

linguistic states but he had also suggested the creation of a healthy and peaceful atmosphere prior to a linguistic redistribution. Gandhi gave priority to the unity of India before anything else. He supported the linguistic states to be instituted without delay because he knew by his personal experience that cultural development of people could not come except through their own mother tongue.⁵⁵

B. R. Ambedkar, while supporting the linguistic states stated, "The formation of linguistic states, although essential, cannot be decided by any sort of hooliganism. Nor it must be solved in a manner that will serve party interest. It must be solved by cold blooded reasoning."⁵⁶ Ambedkar put forth three basic considerations for setting up the linguistic states. First, viability of the state should be ensured. Secondly, the communal balance should be taken care of. Thirdly, all people speaking one language need not to be put in one state. Depending on the other two factors, the people speaking one language could be divided into several administratively and politically viable states.⁵⁷

The demand for linguistic provinces was, however, voiced by lesser people like Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who argued that the whole problem must be taken up as the first and foremost problem to be solved by the Constituent Assembly.⁵⁸ In his Presidential address of the 55th session of the Congress in 1948 while stressing importance of linguistic states, he stated:

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.79.

⁵⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, Jalandhar: Bheem Patrika Publications, 1955, p.11.

⁵⁷ Ramesh Chandra and Sangh Mittra, *The Ambedkar Era*, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 2003, p.176.

⁵⁸ O. P. Goyal, *op.cit.*, p.205.

By drawing circular and straight lines upon the map countries cannot be formed and so do not the rivers or mountains alone make them. Every country and nation has got different types of people whose progress depends upon their traditions, lands, mountains, rivers, climate and politics. Language alone is such strong force which keeps them tied together: - Culture takes its birth in language and is followed by habits and customs.⁵⁹

APPOINTMENT OF DAR COMMISSION (1948)

Nehru, due to persisting pressure, accepted the demand to create linguistic provinces, on May 27, 1948.⁶⁰ On June 17, 1948, on his recommendation, Rajendra Prasad, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly appointed a Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K. Dar, a retired judge of the Allahabad High Court. The members of the Commission were Jagat Narain, a member of Constituent Assembly, Panna Lal, a retired Indian Civil Servant (ICS) and B.C. Bannerji, Accountant General, as Secretary. After reviewing various memoranda, visiting the concerned provinces, the committee in its report (56 pages report) which was submitted on December 10, 1948, rejected the demand of political organization of the country along linguistic lines, on the plea that it would do immense harm to national unity.⁶¹ The verdict of this Commission was hostile to the idea of linguistic reorganization of the

⁵⁹ *A Case for Bigger Himachal or The Inevitable Shape of Himachal Pradesh*, Simla: Government of India, Army Press, n.d., p.4.

⁶⁰ B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution, Select Documents*, Vol. 4, Bombay: Tripathi and Co., 1969, p.439.

⁶¹ *Report of Linguistic Provinces Commission*, (Constituent Assembly of India), New Delhi: Manager, Government of India Press, 1948.

country. The Commission argued that linguistic states could not be established without a loss of administrative efficiency and the creation of unhappy linguistic minorities. They were of the view that it would be irresponsible to accept the demand for linguistic states. They also believed that this would be impatriotic because this would weaken national unity at a time when every effort was required to preserve it.⁶² The Dar Commission observed as follows:

The formation of provinces on exclusively or even mainly linguistic consideration is not in the larger interest of the Indian Nation and should not be taken in hand.... In the formation of new provinces, whenever such a work is taken in hand, oneness of language may be one of the factors to be taken into consideration along with others, but it should not be the decisive or even the 'main' factor... if India lives, all her problems will be solved. If India does not survive, nothing will be gained by solving her linguistic provinces problems alone.

The Dar Commission further observed:

Linguistic homogeneity in the formation of new provinces is certainly attainable within certain limits, but only at the cost of creating a fresh minority problem. Nowhere will it be possible to form a linguistic province of more than 70 to 80 percent of the people speaking the same language, thus leaving in each province a minority of 20 percent of people speaking other languages.⁶³

⁶² O. P. Goyal, *op.cit.*, p.206.

⁶³ K. M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, p.230.

The Dar Commission listed certain "generally recognized" tests which a linguistic area must satisfy before it could be formed into a province. These were:

- (1) Geographical contiguity and absence of pockets and corridors.
Financial self-sufficiency.
- (2) Administrative convenience.
- (3) Capacity for future development.
- (4) A large measure of agreement within its borders and amongst the people speaking the same language in regard to its formation, care being taken that the new province should not be forced by a majority upon a substantial minority of people speaking the same language.⁶⁴

The recommendations of the Commission did not, however, satisfy those minds that were working in the direction of creating such provinces. Inside the Indian National Congress also there was a strong feeling in respect of this demand. The supporters of the demand for linguistic states were of a different view. They believed that the denial of those demands would not strengthen but would rather weaken the national unity.⁶⁵

The gist of the Dar Commission arguments was as follows: 1) The country was not yet free from dangers of external aggression (The Kashmir war had just concluded in a cease-fire); 2) The country is in the grip of an economic crisis of great magnitude; 3) The Indian States had not been properly integrated; 4) The country could not bear the financial and

⁶⁴ *Report of Linguistic Provinces Commission*, op.cit., Para 10.

⁶⁵ O. P. Goyal, *op.cit.*, p.206.

administrative strain of creating new provinces and 5) the country was forced with many more urgent problems.⁶⁶

The Congress Party was dejected by the report of the Dar Commission. Therefore, immediately after publication of its report, it formed its own committee known as JVP Committee (named after first alphabet of the name of its members) at its Jaipur Session in 1949. The Committee consisted of Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya.⁶⁷ The Committee laid down some wholesome formulae in their report:

- a) When the Congress had given the seal of its approval to the general principle of linguistic provinces, it was not faced with the practical application of the principle and hence it had not considered all the implications and consequences that arose from this practical application.
- b) The primary consideration must be security, unity and economic prosperity of India, and every separatist and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged.
- c) Language was not only a binding force, but also a separating one.
- d) The old Congress policy of having linguistic provinces could only be applied after careful thought had been given to each separate case and without creating serious administrative dislocation or mutual conflicts which could jeopardize the political and economic stability of the country.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Satish Chandra, K. C. Pande and P. C. Mathur, *Regionalism and National Integration* (Proceedings of a Seminar), Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 1976, pp.124-133.

⁶⁷ JVP stands for Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

⁶⁸ K. M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, pp. 230-231.

The members of the committee did not either support the linguistic basis of provinces or opposed it tooth and nail. This committee was against linguistic provinces for giving priority to security, unity and economic prosperity of India. However, there were certain reservations. It conceded that the case of Andhra Pradesh should be taken up first.⁶⁹

The JVP Committee, in the report, viewing the problem in the context of the altered conditions after the attainment of independence and the new problems facing the country, observed:

We feel that the conditions that have emerged in India since the achievement of independence are such as to make us view the problems of linguistic provinces in a new light... we would prefer to postpone the formation of new provinces for a few years so that we might concentrate during this period on other matters of vital importance and not allow ourselves to be distracted by this question. However, 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 whole and certain conditions which have been specified above. Public sentiment must clearly realize the consequence of any further division so that it may fully appreciate what will flow from their demand.⁷⁰

The leaders warned that the old Congress policy of having linguistic provinces could only be applied after careful thought had been given to

⁶⁹ *Indian National Congress: Report of Linguistic Provinces Commission*, April 1, 1949.

⁷⁰ K. M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, p.231.

each separate case and without creating serious administrative location or mutual conflicts which would jeopardize the political and economic stability of the country.⁷¹ They particularly accepted that the instance of Andhra was not one where a strong case could be made and on which an open mind could be retained. The Committee felt that for the present, formation of the new provinces would not be a proper step. However, they also agreed that if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, they were ready to submit to it. The belief of Nehru was that some kind of reorganization was inevitable but that cultural, geographic and economic factors as well as language must be taken into account.⁷²

The J.V.P. Committee's report was adopted by the Congress Working Committee in April, 1949. Since then, the Congress has broadly adhered to the views expressed in this report. This would be clear from the election manifesto issued by the Congress in 1951 and the resolutions passed by it since 1949. While many important leaders of various organizations accepted the JVP Report, the Telugu-speaking people living in the then state of Madras failed to resist their resentment. The inference of the JVP Report provided them 'an irresistible invitation to bend their energies to closing the minds of the leaders in the right direction'.⁷³

Prime Minister Nehru suggested the course of patient discussion, so that any decision taken in regard to the bifurcation of any unit of the Indian Union should be done by the wishes of the people concerned. With special reference to the Telugu-speaking people, he counselled that the creation of

⁷¹ *Report of Linguistic Provinces Commission*, op. cit., p.15.

⁷² O. P. Goyal, *op.cit.*, p.206.

⁷³ W. H. Morris Jones, *Government and Politics of India*, London: Hutchinson and Co., 1971, p.96.

any province should not be done by means of coercion or force or at the expense of the pleasure of the neighbours. Unfortunately the impatient people could not properly appreciate the advice of Nehru. Patel was even more firm and said that the history of India has taught the lesson that linguistic separation was dangerous to national solidarity and unity. The Communists exploited the situation and the demand of the Telugu-speaking people of the merger of the 'B' Class State of Hyderabad with their desired Andhra State.⁷⁴

The linguistic redistribution of states also figured prominently in the resolutions and election manifestoes of other Indian political parties. The Socialist Party declared that it was in favour of the redistribution of states on a linguistic basis consistent with geographic contiguity and economic stability. S.M. Joshi, socialist Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Bombay, in an article in *Times of India*, May 28, 1953, added that linguistic redistribution was as much a part of the constructive process in our country as the Five Year Plan.⁷⁵ The Communist Party stood for national states on a linguistic basis, enjoying wide powers including the right of self-determination. At a meeting organized by the Bombay Committee of the Communist Party, A.K. Gopalan the Communist Member of Parliament (MP), said that the two most important considerations in the formation of the States were the language and the wishes of the people. The Hindu Mahasabha believed in the policy of formation of provinces on a linguistic

⁷⁴ J.C. Johari, *Indian Politics*, Jalandhar: Vishal Publications, 1996, pp. 214-215.

⁷⁵ Krishna P. Mukerji and Suhasini Ramaswamy, *Reorganization of Indian States*, Bombay: the Popular Book Depot, 1955, p.11.

basis but was of the opinion that due regard should be given to the problem of defence and to other factors like area and economic stability.⁷⁶

The refusal to recognize the demand for reorganization of states on linguistic basis by the Congress at central level created increasing discontent among Congressmen at the provincial level. When a Communist member of the Lok Sabha introduced a resolution in July 1952 demanding immediate creation of linguistic states, despite Nehru's clear rejection of the resolution, many Congressmen like Gadgil, Punjabrao Deshmukh and others supported the formation of linguistic states. However, the resolution was defeated, 261 against 77, because the Congressmen prudently decided to obey the party whip. This once again illustrated the vacillating attitude of the Congress to the whole question.⁷⁷ The Congress Presidential election of 1948 also played a part in the development of the language controversy, although the question of language was not directly involved. The election was to take place in October 1948, less than a month before the beginning of the seventh Assembly Session, when Rajendra Prasad's year of office expired. The question that came up was that whether Rajendra Prasad should be replaced by Pattabhi Sitaramayya, a Telugu speaker from Madras province, or Purushottam Das Tandon from north. A contest between a northern and a southern at this time was bound to have linguistic overtones.⁷⁸

Under the Constitution of India, the states were organised according to the political development of the states. All the states were put in A B C D

⁷⁶ M. V. Pylee, *op.cit.*, p.168.

⁷⁷ Karat Prakash, *op.cit.*, p.37.

⁷⁸ Granville Austin, *op.cit.*, pp. 280-281.

categories.⁷⁹ At the time of the commencement of the Constitution, there were nine Part A states, eight Part B states and ten Part C states. The provisions regarding the states were made in the Article 3 of the Constitution. The princely states were integrated to form five new Union of States and some smaller states were merged with other states. Soon after the implementation of the Constitution, the question of linguistic states again cropped up. The movement was started in Andhra. A veteran Congress leader Swami Sitaram started an organized and popular campaign to pressurize the Government of India on the basis of Nehru's assurances regarding the creation of Andhra state as early as possible. He started his fast on August 16, 1952 and broke it after 35 days at the intervention of Acharya Vinoba Bhave. When nothing happened to the satisfaction of the Telugu-speaking people, Poti Sriramulu started his fast unto death. Unfortunately he died after 56 days of fasting on December 15, 1952. This tragedy created a very serious situation. All legislators hailing from Andhra region resigned their seats in Madras Legislative Assembly in protest. Violence broke out in different parts of the state. As a result of this, casualties took place particularly in the District of Nellore and Vijaywada. The resolution recommending the division of India on linguistic basis was moved and accepted by the All India Congress Committee at its Hyderabad session in January 1953, and this made the common man believe that the principle of linguism has been generally accepted by the most numerous party in the country.

The non-Congress parties, meanwhile, began to strengthen the demand for linguistic reconstitution of states by setting up a Redistribution

⁷⁹ W. H. Morris Jones, *op.cit.*, p.45.

Committee of 85 members. Later a Linguistic States Conference under the presidentship of Lanka Sundaram demanded the immediate redistribution of India on a linguistic basis and the apportionment of a Boundary Commission which should submit its report within six months. Later on, a Committee of this body after reviewing the regional movements for reorganization which were being started in the country demanded the immediate disintegration of Hyderabad state so as to facilitate the formation of linguistic states like Karnataka, Maharashtra and Vishal Andhra. Support was also given to the demand for a Punjabi - speaking state. The Conference favoured the formation of the linguistic states to avoid civil war and prevent the continuance of pressure - group politics.⁸⁰ All these circumstances moved Prime Minister Nehru and he announced his decision to create a state of the Telugu- speaking people.⁸¹ Ambedkar wrote in 1953 that, "the Andhra state being contemplated is only a 'Pindadan' to the soul of Sriramulu by the Prime Minister."⁸²

The Wanchoo Commission was appointed by the Government of India to demarcate the boundaries for making the state of Andhra and to consider and report on the financial and other implications arising out of the formation of the new state. Since, it could settle every issue other than the case of Bellary district, another commission under Justice L.S. Misra was set up which advised in favour of giving away this district to the state of Mysore. On August 10, 1953 a bill was introduced in the House of the People "to provide for the formation of the Andhra State." The State of Andhra, which according to the statement made by the Deputy Home

⁸⁰ Mukerji and Ramaswamy, *op.cit.*, p.6.

⁸¹ Karat Prakash, *op.cit.*, pp.37-41.

⁸² Ramesh Chandra and Sangh Mittra, *op.cit.*, p.175.

Minister in Parliament on 17 August 1953, was a province which approximated as much as possible to a linguistic province, came into existence on October 1, 1953 with its capital at Kurnool. The government appointed Chandulal Trivedi, ex-Governor of East Punjab, as the Chief Administrative Officer for Andhra affairs.⁸³

STATES REORGANIZATION COMMISSION

With the acceptance of the demand of Andhra the struggle over reorganization of India on linguistic basis dominated Indian politics from 1953 to 1956.⁸⁴ Government was under pressure to consider the demand made by other linguistic groups also. Hence, to solve this gigantic problem, Nehru made a statement in Parliament on December 22, 1953 to the effect that a commission would be appointed to examine 'objectively and dispassionately' the question of the reorganization of the states of Indian Union 'so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as the nation as a whole is promoted.' The Commission was appointed under a Resolution of the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs No.53/69/53-Public, dated 29 October, 1953. The then Home Minister K. N. Katju announced the appointment of the Commission.⁸⁵ Justice Fazal Ali (Chief Justice of Patna High Court) headed the Commission and the two other members of the Commission were Hriday Nath Kunzru and K.M. Pannikar. The Commission was to re-examine the question of linguistic reorganization of the Indian states while bearing in mind 'consideration of

⁸³ Mukerji and Ramaswamy, *op.cit.*, p.7.

⁸⁴ Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.481.

⁸⁵ V.D. Mahajan, *Fifty-Five Years of Modern India (1919-1974)*, New Delhi: S. Chand and Co, 1975, f.n.2 p.482; *Parliamentary Debates, House of People*, Part II, Vol. X, December 07-24, 1953, Cols. 2842-2844.

national security, need to preserve and enhance national unity, viability of the units and welfare of the people, including linguistic minorities. Para 7 of the resolution mentioned above, runs like this:

The Commission will investigate the conditions of 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 in regard to the broad principles, which should govern the solution to this problem and, if they so choose, the broad lines on which particular States should be reorganized, and submit interim reports for the consideration of government.⁸⁶

Under this resolution the Commission was required to make recommendations to the Government of India not later than June 30, 1955. This period was subsequently extended to September 30, 1955. The Commission was at liberty to devise the procedure for collecting information and for ascertaining public opinion.

The Government's decision to appoint a Commission on state boundaries was welcomed by various group leaders in Parliament although there was difference of opinion on the time given to the Commission to submit its report. Hiren Mukerjee, Deputy Leader of the Communist Parliamentary Party, expressed satisfaction on the appointment of the

⁸⁶ *Report of States Reorganization Commission (SRC)*, Appendix A, Para 7, New Delhi: Manager, Government of India Press, 1955, p.265.

Commission. At the same time he was of the opinion that the Commission could have been asked to report much earlier than the June 30, 1955. The protagonist of the linguistic states S. Nijalingappa, President of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, expected good results from the appointment of the Commission. Leaders in Maharashtra also welcomed the appointment of the Commission. Y. B. Chavan, Minister for Civil Supplies said that it was a step further in the direction of forming linguistic states. Thus, the reaction of various leaders to the appointment of the Commission was quite favourable, and the attitude of the government was also encouraging.⁸⁷ The main purpose of the States Reorganization Commission was to recommend the President the basis on which states should be reorganized.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission issued a press note on February 23, 1954, inviting written memoranda from members of the public associations interested on the problems of the reorganization of states. After examining 1,52,250 memoranda and petitions, interviewing over 9000 persons and travelling over thousand sq. kms, the commission submitted its report consisting of 267 pages on October 10, 1955. The report of the Commission contained four parts. Part I and II dealt respectively with the history of the problem and the factors bearing on reorganization. Part IV contained suggestions for minimizing the stresses of transition to linguistic states. The nucleus of the report, however, was dynamic - Part III, 'Proposals for Reorganization'. This was of course exactly the part that everyone was waiting for with bated

⁸⁷ Phool Kumar Sharma, "Integration of Indian States and the Reorganization of States in India", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, January-June, 1967, Nos. 1 and 2, p.241.

breath with the certain knowledge that there would be winners and losers in the stakes, and no doubt with the apprehension common to all humanity that 'they' would get everything 'they' wanted whereas 'we' should come up short with nothing.⁸⁸

The Commission, however, felt that in multilingual states political leadership and administrative authority remained the monopoly of the dominant language groups, linguistic minorities were denied an effective voice in the governance of their states. Commission felt that language being the most faithful reflection of culture of an ethnic group, ethno-lingual boundary was considered the most rational, stable and suitable for the working of democratic institutions. The Commission reported:

It is obviously an advantage that constituent units of a federation should have a minimum measure of internal cohesion. Likewise, a regional consciousness, not merely in the sense of a negative awareness of absence of repression or exploitation but also in the sense of scope for positive expression of the collective personality of a people inhabiting a State or a region may be conducive to the contentment and well being of the community. Common language may not only promote the growth of such regional consciousness but also make for administrative convenience for a proper understanding of governmental measures by the people. Indeed, in a democracy the people legitimately claim and the government have a duty to ensure that the administration is conducted in a language which the people can understand.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Robert. D. King, *op.cit.*, pp.118-119.

⁸⁹ *Report of SRC*, Para 142, *op.cit.*, p.40.

Dwelling on the factors having a bearing on the issue, the Commission stated:

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 reorganize States on the basis of the single test of either language or culture, but a balanced approach to the whole problem is necessary in the interest of national unity.... All the committees and commissions, which have previously gone into the matter such as the Dar Commission and JVP Committee, have rightly expressed themselves against a monistic approach to the problem.⁹⁰

It emphasized the need of a balanced approach and said in Para 163 of its report that such an approach was:

- a) To recognize linguistic homogeneity as an important factor conducive to administrative convenience and efficiency but not to consider it as an exclusive and binding principle overriding all other considerations, administrative, financial or political;
- (b) to ensure that the communicational, educational and cultural needs of different language groups whether resident in predominantly uni-lingual or composite units, are adequately met;

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Para 162, p.45.

- (c) where satisfactory conditions exist and the balance of economic, political and administrative considerations favour composite states, to continue them with necessary safeguards to ensure that all sections enjoy equal rights and opportunities;
- (d) to repudiate the 'homeland' concept,
- (e) to reject the theory of 'one language one state' which is neither justified on grounds of linguistic homogeneity, because there can be more than one state speaking the same language without offending the linguistic principle, nor practicable since different language groups including the vast Hindi speaking population of the Indian Union can not always be consolidated to form distinct linguistic units and,
- (f) finally to the extent that the realization of unilinguism at state level would tend to breed particularistic feeling, to counter that feeling by positive measures calculated to give deeper content to Indian nationalism, to promote greater inter-play of different regional cultures and inter-state co-operation and accord; and to reinforce the links between the centre and the states in order to secure a great co-ordinate working of national policies and programmes.⁹¹

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Para 163, p.46.

Thus, giving importance to the unity of India, the commission rejected the theory of 'one language, one state' and 'the homeland concept'. But it recognized linguistic homogeneity as an important factor 'conducive to administrative convenience and efficiency'. Thus, in addition to the balanced approach, the commission gave importance to geographical, political, economic, administrative conditions and the wishes of the people. The Commission was of the opinion that the linguistic homogeneity was considered an instrument to ensure clear association of the government with the people, but this criterion did not apply to the Punjab because both Hindi and Punjabi was understood by the people with equal facility.⁹² It adopted the district as the basic unit. Instead of A, B, C and D categories of states, it divided all the states into two categories – States and Union Territories. According to the scheme of reorganization, the report in its Chapter II to XIX of part III recommended that there should be sixteen constituent units to be called States and three administered territories.⁹³ Its final recommendations were briefly as follows:

- 1) India should be divided into sixteen states namely, Andhra, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Karnataka, Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Vidarbha and West Bengal.
- 2) Three territories namely Delhi, Manipur and Andaman and Nicobar Islands should be administered as Central areas.
- 3) All part 'C' states should be abolished.

⁹² Satya. M. Roy, *Punjab Since Partition*, Delhi: Durga Publications, 1986, p.292.

⁹³ *Report of SRC*, op.cit., Para 27, p.256.

- 4) The constituent states of the union should be treated at par in respect of their powers and position in the constitution.⁹⁴

The states, which were to disappear, were those of Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, Kutchh, Saurashtra, Coorg, Madhya Bharat, Bhopal, Vindhya Pradesh, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Himachal Pradesh, Ajmer and Tripura. It suggested the reorganization of Union Territories into Punjab (including Himachal Pradesh), U.P., Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Andhra, Madras, Karnataka, Kerala, Hyderabad, Bombay, Vidharbha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Jammu and Kashmir.⁹⁵ It rejected the demand for a separate Punjabi Suba, Haryana Province, Jharkhand and Maru Pradesh. It did not accept the demand for separation of Maharashtra from Gujarat. It proposed the retention of Punjab and Bombay as bilingual provinces. According to the Commission, the linguistic complexion and the communicational needs of the Punjab did not justify the creation of a Punjabi-speaking State. The creation of such a State was likely to disrupt the economic life of the area. There was no case for a Punjabi-speaking State because it lacked the general support of the people inhabiting the area, and because it was not to eliminate any of the causes of friction from which the demand for a separate Punjabi-speaking State had arisen. The Punjabi Suba was to solve neither the language nor the communal problem. On the other hand, it might further exacerbate the existing feelings. PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh were too small to continue

⁹⁴ Raj Narain Gupta and Ramesh Narain Mathur, *Development and Working of Indian Constitution*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1962, pp.258-259.

⁹⁵ R.C. Agarwal, *Constitutional Development and National Movement in India*, New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1988, p.188-189.

by themselves. Having regard to the economic and administrative links between PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh on the one hand and on the present Punjab State on the other, the merger of these two states in the Punjab was justified.⁹⁶

PEPSU was recommended to be merged with Punjab on the ground that it was physically and geographically a part of the Punjab. It was the smallest of the part B States, comparable in size to the existing part C State, Vindhya Pradesh and was not compact. It consisted of five disconnected bits which were surrounded by territories of Punjab. Above all, Punjab and PEPSU had common problems to face. Himachal Pradesh was recommended to be merged with Punjab as the catchment area of the Sutlej and the Beas is mostly in Himachal Pradesh (Annexure III). From the point of view of Bhakara Project this fact was of great importance. PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh ordinarily had shown surplus on revenue account in the past so that they could not be considered as liabilities to the new expanded state.⁹⁷

In rejecting the demand for Punjabi Suba, however, the Commission based its opposition on two grounds primarily – that the Punjabi language was not sufficiently distinct either grammatically or spatially from the Hindi and that the movement lacked the general support of the people, inhabiting the area. The lack of general support referred particularly to the opposition of the Punjabi speaking Hindus, who the Commission noted, had gone to the extent of denying that Punjabi was their mother tongue.⁹⁸ In a separate

⁹⁶ V. D. Mahajan, *op.cit.*, pp. 483-484.

⁹⁷ V. Venkat Rao, *op.cit.*, p.186.

⁹⁸ Paul. R. Brass, *Religion, Language and Politics in North India*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.320.

note of dissent, the Chairman recommended that the Himachal Pradesh should continue as a separate unit and should be under the direct control of the Central Government. Regarding other states K. M. Panikker, one of the members of the state reorganization commission, favoured the creation of a new state to be called the state of Agra consisting of part of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat and Vindhya Pradesh.

The Report was released for eliciting public opinion on October 10, 1955. It received a mixed reaction. A conference of the chief ministers of the states was held in October 1955 to consider the first reaction of the different states to the proposals made in the report. The Government received over 1, 22,000 memoranda and representations. There was a lot of agitation against the recommendations of the commission. The Mahasabha opposed states' reorganization as it 'militates against the integrity of India.' It charged Nehru of being blackmailed into accepting the 'pernicious principle' after the death of Sriramulu in Andhra. V.D. Savarkar the ideologist of the Sabha stated, "I acknowledge only one mother, i.e. Mother India and do not treat province as sub-nations."⁹⁹ The Maharashtrians raised a lot of hue and cry over the city of Bombay.

The Congress High Command declared that it was willing to make alterations in the recommendations of the Commission if all the interested parties agreed upon any alternative. Prolonged negotiations were held and many changes were made in the recommendations of the Commission but the problem of Bombay city could not be solved. Even when the States Reorganization Bill was to be sent to the Parliament, the Maharashtrians were absolutely dissatisfied. However when the Bill was being discussed in

⁹⁹ Karat Prakash, *op.cit.*, pp. 167-168.

Lok Sabha, bitter sense prevailed and it was decided to create the bilingual state of Bombay containing all the territories of Maharashtra and Saurashtra with Bombay as capital.¹⁰⁰

On January 16, 1956 the Government of India announced its decision on most of the recommendations of the Commission. In doing so, it accepted most of the Commission's recommendations but altered a few of them on grounds of mutual agreement among the parties concerned. It accepted for example, the formation of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and the Andhra Pradesh states. In respect of Himachal Pradesh, it accepted the recommendations of the Chairman. The Chairman of the Commission recommended that Himachal Pradesh should continue as a separate unit under the direct control of the central government. The formation of Bombay, Gujarat and Maharashtra States proved to be the most controversial subject. The Government first decided that Bombay should be constituted into a separate City-State, and Maharashtra and Gujarat should be formed into separate units. After prolonged discussions and negotiations, it was finally decided that Bombay should constitute a bilingual state, comprising the Gujarati and Marathi speaking areas and the whole of Bombay.¹⁰¹

As regards Punjab, the Government of India while accepting the recommendations of the Chairman, decided that Himachal Pradesh would be a Union Territory and that Punjab would consist of the existing states of Punjab and PEPSU. It was, however, pointed out that the separate existence of Himachal Pradesh must sooner or later be terminated by

¹⁰⁰ V. D. Mahajan, *op.cit.*, p.484.

¹⁰¹ Raj Narain Gupta and Ramesh Narain Mathur, *op.cit.*, p.259.

merging the territory in the new Punjab. The interval would be used to improve the economic condition of the state. The main motive for adopting this course seemed to be to make it easier for the Sikhs to accept the merger of PEPSU with the Punjab, since the addition of Himachal Pradesh would have meant a diminution of the Sikh percentage in the total population in the new state. At the same time, the assurance that in the long run Himachal Pradesh would be merged with the new Punjab was intended to keep the Hindus quiet.¹⁰²

THE STATES REORGANIZATION ACT, 1956 (ACT 37 OF 1956)

After prolonged discussions and debates in the state legislatures, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and after protracted negotiations between the Union Cabinet and the interested parties, the government announced its decision which was embodied in a Bill called the States Reorganization Bill. The constitution also needed amendments at many places as a result of the proposed reorganization. Both, the amendments of the constitution (the seventh amendment of the constitution) and the Reorganization Bill were placed in the Parliament. The provisions of both the amendment and the Act were based upon the recommendations of States Reorganization Commission, except in a few instances. The most important of these were the decisions with respect to the formation of the Bombay State and the immediate creation of a united Telugu-speaking state of Andhra Pradesh. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on August 10, 1956 and by the Rajya Sabha on August 25, 1956. The bill came into force on November 7,

¹⁰² V. Venkat Rao, *op.cit.*, p.190.

1956. As a result of this Act, 14 states and 6 Union Territories came into existence.¹⁰³ On the suggestion of Jaya Prakash Narayan, the states were further grouped into five zones - Northern, Eastern, Western, Southern and Central. Each of these zones was given a Zonal Council to discuss and make recommendations with regard to border disputes and linguistic minorities. It is only after this that linguism received state patronage and constitutional sanctity.

Both, the States Reorganization Act and the Constitutional Amendment Act have provided adequate safeguards for linguistic minorities, for it was known that even in the reorganized states there would be large groups of such people. It has been provided, for example, that each linguistic minority will have the right to receive education in its mother tongue at the elementary stage. It is also provided that the State Governments will take steps to provide for the use of minority language for certain official purposes, and to secure for the linguistic minorities liberal facilities in respect of secondary education and recruitment of state services. The Constitutional Amendment Act further provided for the appointment of a special officer for linguistic minorities who will report to the President on the working of the safeguards and whose reports will be laid before each House of Parliament and sent to the governments of the states concerned.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ *Constitution of India: As modified upto November 1, 1956*, New Delhi: Manager, Publications, Government of India, Appendix, pp.13-15. List of States – (1) Jammu & Kashmir (2) Punjab (3) Uttar Pradesh (4) Bihar (5) Bengal (6) Assam (7) Orissa (8) Andhra (9) Madras (10) Kerala (11) Mysore (12) Bombay (13) Madhya Pradesh (14) Rajasthan Union Territories – (1) Delhi (2) Manipur (3) Tripura (4) Andaman and Nicobar (5) Lacadive and Minicoy Islands.

¹⁰⁴ Raj Narain Gupta and Ramesh Narain Mathur, *op.cit.*, p.263.

CREATION OF OTHER STATES

Even after the reorganization of states according to the Act of 1956, demand coupled with strong agitation continued for separate states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana etc. The mass movement by the Samyukt Maharashtra Samiti (a united front of the non-congress parties of Maharashtra region of Bombay) and the Maha Gujarat Parishad (a coalition of the non-congress parties of Gujarati speaking people) forced the Government of India to accept the demand for linguistic reorganization of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat under the Bombay Reorganization Act, 1960. The ruling party in the Centre was also compelled to accept these demands, as it was not prepared to lose the forthcoming General Election in Bombay State which was scheduled to be held in 1962. It may be mentioned that the electoral support base of the Congress Party had been badly eroded among the Marathis and Gujaratis on account of the mass movement of the Samyukt Maharashtra Samiti and the Maha Gujarat Parishad. Even during her tenure as President of the Congress in 1959, Indira Gandhi supported the bifurcation of Bombay on a linguistic basis.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the new states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created by the Bombay Reorganization Act, 1960.

French Government agreed to transfer its possession in India of the states of Pondicherry, Yenam, Mahi and Chandernagar and the deed for that purpose was signed by the Government of France and India on May 28, 1956 in New Delhi. While Pondicherry was made a Union Territory and responsible government was introduced in it with an Assembly of 30 seats, other territories were merged with the adjoining provinces or states. The

¹⁰⁵ Karat Prakash, *op.cit*, p.160.

Portuguese territories of Goa, Diu and Daman were liberated on December 20, 1961 and were formally incorporated into the Union on March 12, 1962. First of all, they were made a Union Territory but later on Goa was made a separate State. Nagaland was made a separate State on December 1, 1963. The leadership of Indira Gandhi represented a new attempt to regain the 'balance' (between centre and states) acquired during Nehru era. She acceded to the demand of Punjabi Suba and also presented a plan for an autonomous hill-state in Assam called Meghalaya.¹⁰⁶ The Government of India was forced to reorganize Punjab on linguistic basis on account of the mass movement in favour of Punjabi Suba by the Akali Dal. Punjab was bifurcated into two states, Punjab consisting of Punjabi area and Haryana consisting of Hindi area under Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966. Under this Act, the hilly areas of Punjab were merged into Himachal Pradesh with effect from November 1, 1966.¹⁰⁷ The linguistic reorganization of Punjab completed the process of the linguistic reorganization of the states of India, which was started by the creation of Andhra in 1953.

Thus, in the first round of states' reorganization, the states had been created largely on the linguistic principle, and the last state created on this basis was the resultant state of Punjab as a bifurcation of the bilingual Punjab in November 1966. Most other states created thereafter were either created on ethnic basis (such as Meghalaya) or were simply elevated from centrally administered units to full-fledged states (such as Goa, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh). One thing that may be important to note is that the break-up of the bigger states into smaller ones, even in the 1950s – 1960s, was not always on linguistic basis. Thus when

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.161.

¹⁰⁷ R. C. Agarwal, *op.cit.*, p.190.

Assam was broken up to create new states (like Nagaland) or the Union Territories (like Mizoram), this was actually done on 'anti-linguistic' lines in the sense that non Assamese speaking populations living in the undivided state of Assam were excessively concerned about their possible 'Assamisation' as a result of the declaration of Assamese as the sole official language of the state.¹⁰⁸

Three new states of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal (Uttarakhand) and Jharkhand were created in the year 2000, out of the then existing states Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar respectively, and were made part of the Indian Union. The ideological and political justification for the creation of these states rested on their having a specific, social, cultural and geographical identity distinct from the states that they were earlier part of. It was also believed that these new states would be economically viable, administratively efficient, culturally integrative, socially homogeneous and politically representative. Emergence of these states being the result of popular movements has revived other demands for separate states in a more aggressive manner, for example the demand for Telangana, Vidharbha, Bodoland, Harit Pradesh and Gorkhaland. It is in this context that the absence of a defined criterion for creating new states, there has been a demand to set up a second states reorganization commission to draft a policy that would lay down the basis of new states.

¹⁰⁸ Pradeep Kumar, "Demand for New States: Cultural Identity Loses Ground to Urge for Development", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 35, Nos. 35-36, August 26- Sept 2, 2000, pp. 3078-3082.



