

**CHANGING INTERNAL FEDERAL BOUDBARIES OF INDIAN UNION:
A POLITICO-GEOGRAPHICAL APPRAISAL**

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Abstract: The present paper attempts to study the nature of federal boundary changes within the Indian Union since the federation in 1950. It seeks to evaluate whether or not the changes in the nature of federal boundaries-vis-à-vis the bifurcation of erstwhile Indian States and former British Provinces into constituent units of the Indian Union were a threat to national unity and integrity? It also studies the mechanism of changes and reasons thereof. The study reveals that changes in the internal federal boundaries in the form of creation of Union Territories' and States since 1953 along ethno-cultural pattern is no way pose any threat to national unity and integrity as the Indian Union has stayed together for more than six decades.

Introduction

The demand for a reorganization of provinces on a linguistic basis has a linkage with the struggle for Indian independence, and the Indian National Congress had always supported the idea of creating administrative units based on linguistic homogeneity particularly, during the British days (Karan. 1999:84-85). The reason was that the original British-annexed territories were formed without regard to any rational scientific or linguistic/cultural considerations. British concerned themselves with administrative convenience, and thus the annexation of territories was solely based on smooth running of the administration rather than cultural homogeneity (Sukhwal.1985:31). Under the prevailing administrative system, the British sought to break the territorial contiguity of cultural homogeneity by effecting territorial split, so that the regionalistic movement could not be carried out and/or the loyalty could not be focused upon the region to transform into 'regionalism'. Most of the ethnic communities were either territorially split or merged with other ethnic communities, so that they could not perpetuate their 'distinctiveness' and regional expression. In 1905, the British Government attempt to split the Bengali territory into East Bengal, and West Bengal which was designed to disintegrate the territorial homogeneity of the Bengali 'genre de vie', and also to weaken the movement for regional expression and recognition of the Bengali as a linguistic cultural entity (Adhikari.2008:66). After vigorous linguistic cultural agitation, the British authorities finally decided to withdraw the 'Bengal split plan', and ;split territories' were reunited in 1911, on a linguistic basis. In 1917 the Telegu-speaking people, who constituted a separate and

distinguishable linguistic cultural entity, but, were forcefully merged with the Tamils in Madras Presidency, also launched an agitation for separation from the Tamil control. In fact, the Telegu-speaking people strove for their recognition as a separate cultural entity in the Peninsular India. However, the agitation was suppressed. These were the two basic examples of regionalistic movements, based on cultural-linguistic distinctiveness of the communities which could be linked with the freedom struggle in the sense that the struggle for recognition as a separate territorial-cultural-political entity was necessarily aimed at securing the regional expression vis-à-vis independence.

At the Nagpur Session (1920) of Indian National Congress it was resolved to apply the principle of linguistic/cultural redistribution of political units on an all India basis. To implement the objective of the resolution, the party set up an all India committee in 1928 under Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, to look into the desirability of the linguistic/cultural territorialization and reorganization of India, and whether or not such redistribution of political units would be viable and logical, given the political scenario of the system. The Nehru Committee reported that the redistribution should be partly geographical and partly economic and financial, but the main consideration should necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the areas concerned (Bondurant.1955:22).

Present paper attempts to interpret, and evaluate the role of the politico-geographical factors for changes in the internal federal boundaries in contemporary Indian politics, particularly with reference to the linguistic/cultural, economic and political landscapes. It has to be ascertained, also, whether the language regions be treated against the backdrop of ethno-linguistic processes? Regions are, by and large, socially constructed places that reflect and shape social, political, economic and cultural processes, giving a 'unique' and 'distinguishable' identity to them. Interpretation of this kind can shed light on a number of different facets of the contemporary Indian polity. It also takes into account the pertinent questions as to what extent has the linguistic partitioning of India's political space weakened the *raison d'être* of the Union.

Conceptual Background

For a longer period, particularly since the cessation of the Second World War, there was a general tendency to treat the state as the only territorial unit of great significance in the industrialized societies. Gradually the term 'nation-state' came to be used. A nation-state was defined as a sovereign political territory composed of a single group who see themselves as one (Agnew.1987; Connor.1978). But it was rather different to call a multi-national state as a nation-state, given the contemporary definition of a nation-state. It was in the multi-national state that the processes like the sub-state ethnicity, and sub-nationalism were of paramount importance; nevertheless such phenomena received scant attention. It was also found that very few states actually

conformed to the model suggested for defining as nation-state. Latter on most western social scientists preferred to use the term 'nation-state' to refer to any sovereign state, no matter how ethnicity heterogeneous that state might be (Mikesell. 1983). India could be better defined as a 'nation-state', in spite of being ethno-nationality heterogeneous, in the light of the model, suggested by Mikesell. It requires to be ascertained how the development of different factors affected the national polity of India, and its integrated national identity.

India is often conceptualized as a 'great nation' composed of several major and minor nations and/or sub-nations. A group of persons whether large or small, if linked by complementary habits and facilities of language and communication, may be called a people with territorial identification. A region in this context should not be viewed simply as spatial surrogates for social group, but as a part of the fabric of the society itself (Soja.1971; Sack.1986). India or for that matter "South Asian States should be viewed as collectives of (linguistic) nations coexisting within federal state" (Oommen.1999). Partition has split and divided some of the great nations of South Asia – Bengal, Punjab, and Nagaland. Nevertheless, the region-forming process(es) on the basis of linguistic identification, and specification have continued unabated since the federation in 1950, with each region becoming a functional region. "Region could be treated as social constructions of particular significance, since ethnic and cultural differences are intimately bound-up with territorial arrangements and understanding (Williams and Smith. 1983).

The sub-state ethnicity and sub-state-nationalism, based on territorial characteristics are causing the regional change and the devolution of power to regional administration in a way as to inevitably lead to the new political and economic arrangement that are emerging in the form a 'coalition culture' in the governance at the various spatial scales, local, regional, and national and where the impact is likely to be felt on the institutional framework for inter-group relations and interaction within state.

Nations and Sub-Nations in India

There is a 'cause and effect' relationship between linguism and nationalism while, the former refer to "an excessive political attachment to a linguistic loyalty", the later is a doctrine based on "the idea that every nation (i.e. an historic entity) should have its own state". The very formations of a nation, as an historic entity largely depends on "the complementarity or communicative efficiency which is an overall function of the language that hold the people together, to the extent, as they see themselves as one" (Deutsh. 1953). It is the language that provides that "raison d'être" to a nation as an historical entity, because it is through the language that the people are bound together to develop an idealized self-image of a nation – the acceptable part of the national culture and the heritage, of which the people "emerging as a nation" feel proud. A region-based linguistic loyalty is a politico-geographical necessity for the

people to emerge as a unique and distinguishable historical entity so that they can feel themselves as belonging together, or can see themselves as one.

A people without a language cannot constitute a nation. A nation remains intact if it maintains its distinctive linguistic identity and traditions. It is, indeed, a reality of history that the rise of nationalism necessarily coincided with the rise of linguism, because it was the language that determined the territorial limit/boundary of the nation, and held it together within the bounds. The unity of language is therefore, more durable for survival and permanence than the unity of religion so far as the nationality formation is concerned.

The linguistic communities in India have long struggled for their recognition as nation/sub-nation, and sought to perpetuate their distinctiveness through the political organization of their respective territories. The States Reorganization Act of 1956, and the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956 together, accorded recognition to those linguistic communities, particularly, which strove for it, through redefining territorial boundaries along linguistic lines, of the respective communities-concerned, and that led to the 'social area formation and interaction', besides social constructions. The administrative and political partitioning of India's political space through a nation-wide political process, was in effect a vindication of the definition of nation as linguistic collectively with a territorial base. It was the concept of national determinism that dominated the internal boundary drawing, during the reorganization period and the language criterion was accepted as a legitimate indication of national preference.

The idea of linguistic states rested primarily on the premise that these linguistic groups are nations and sub-nations, and as such they are contracting parties to the Republican Constitution from which the Federation and Centre derive their existence and power (Indian Institute of Public Administration. 1968). To conceptualize India "as a great nation composed of several major, and minor nations and sub-nations" necessarily expressed both ambivalence and fear. The ambivalence was implicit in the recognition accorded to the specificity of major and minor nations or nationalities accompanied by an unwillingness to accept their specificity completely. Thus, the ambiguity and fear was evident in India.

The subsequent developments reinforced further the primacy of language as a national question. The language issue did not subside even after the reorganization of states on the basis of linguistic regions. (Karna.1999:86). Allaying the fear, expressed by the Linguistic Province Commission, Rasheed-ud-din Khan however, stated that: "Every urge for autonomy is not divisive, but most probably a complementary force, it would not lead to balkanization but to the restructuring of national identity, it is not a fissiparous but a normal centrifugal tendency in a federation; it should not be taken as a call for disintegration of the national sovereignty, but its reintegration." (Khan.1973). The people of these linguistic collectivities who consider themselves as nations

and sub-nations, have never aspired to become sovereign states rather, they have only insisted on having a certain amount of administrative, fiscal and political autonomy and now there is a 'co-existence' of a plurality of nation within the federal set-up.

Reorganization of Indian States after Independence

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 created a two-tier spatial political structure for Indian dominion. They were, British Provinces and the territories of the Princely States. At that time, India was divided into 562 princely states and 09 British provinces (Sukhwai. 1985:02) (**Figure. 01**).

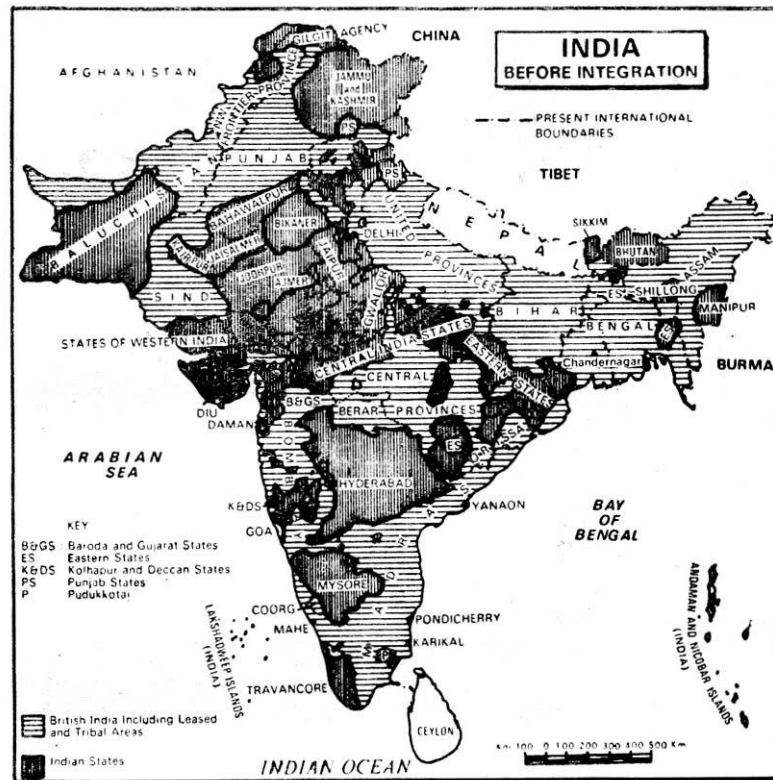


Figure: 1. India, Before Integration: August 10, 1947

An option was provided in the Act for the Princely States that they could either remain independent or accede to any of the Dominions. Integration was achieved by following a realistic policy of consolidation and adjustment. Some states were merged with provinces geographically contiguous to them; some were formed into viable unions of states, and some were converted into centrally administrative areas (Krishnaswami. 1965:16). However, the Princely States acceded to the Indian Union by peaceful negotiations before August 15, 1947, though police action and referendum had to be resorted in Junagadh, and Hyderabad. In case of Jammu and Kashmir (which was predominant a Muslim State with a Hindu ruler/Maharaja), the Ruler sought to remain

independent of both Pakistan and India for some obvious reason, regardless of the provision of accession of the Indian Independence Act, 1947. (**Figure. 02**)

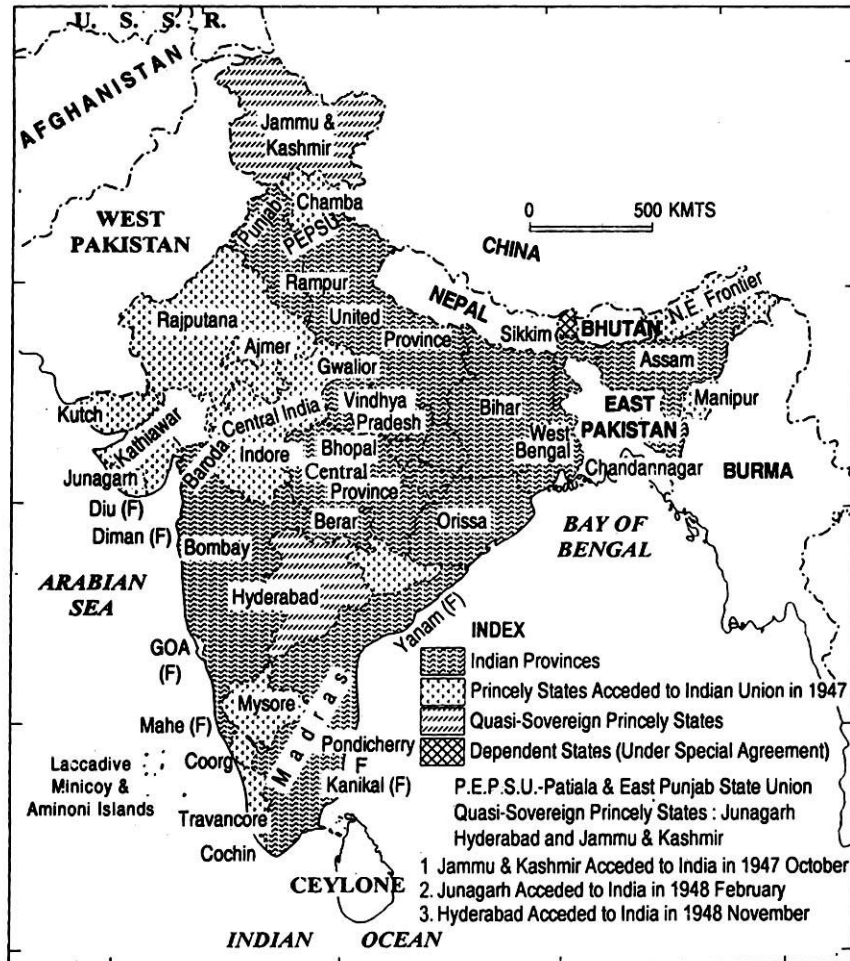


Figure: 2. Political Geography of Indian Dominion: (August 15, 1947)

But, ultimately he acceded to India on October 26, 1947 leading to infiltration and war. The State is still regarded as 'disputed'. However, in a little over two years after independence the political geography of India was rationalized by the merger, or the consolidation and integration of states (Srinivasan. 1956). The boundaries formed after the integration of Princely states and the former British provinces were economically, administratively, linguistically, and culturally illogical (Sukhwai. 1985:26).

Immediately after independence on November 27, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, on behalf of the Government of India accepted in the Constituent Assembly, the principle underlying the demand for linguistic/cultural political

units. It was against this background that the President of the Constituent Assembly of India set up a (three-man) *Dar commission* in June 1948. It was appointed to look into the question of state formation on the linguistic pattern, particularly in the Peninsular India where a number of ethnic communities had been striving for recognition as separate entities. The Dar Commission, however, strongly opposed the formation of political units/state along the linguistic/cultural patterns. It said that everything which helped the growth of an all Indian nationalism in the New Indian State had to be sustained but that which hindered it required to be rejected. It further warned that the unity of this new Indian State would be at stake if the political geography of the Union were to be redrawn along linguistic/cultural lines (Sukhwai.1985:33-34).

Not satisfied by the observation of the Dar Commission, the Government of India, appointed a three-man Linguistic Provinces Committee, known as the J. V. P. Committee. The JVP Committee submitted its report on April 01, 1949. However, it also opposed the reorganization of the Indian State along the linguistic/cultural patterns. The JVP Committee observed that administrative, financial, and economic problems might be overlooked, and overshadowed. It must be mentioned here, that the Indian National Congress, during the pre-independence period, had always advocated and supported the idea of linguistic/cultural reorganization of the India, but soon after independence, its stand on linguistic/cultural states, became highly ambiguous.

I

In 1950, just on the eve of the inauguration of the Constitution, there were four categories of states each with a particular pattern and status of its own. These categories known as 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' states (**Figure.03**) which simply sustained conflictual pluralism in the form of sub-state regionalism, ethnicity, and nationalism, leading to the 'landscape' formation transforming each of them into social area formation and interaction, and converting each of them again into "social action areas and counter action areas" , and so on. As a result, there was a greater amount of instability in the geography of the Indian federation that the new Indian State had established (Pounds. 1972).



Figure: 3. Political Geography of Indian Republic (January 26, 1950)

Table: 01

Status of States according to the Indian Constitution, 1950

Part 'A' States	Part 'B' States	Part 'C' States	Part 'D' States
1. Assam	1. Hyderabad	1. Ajmer	1. Andaman & Nicobar Island
2. Bihar	2. Mysore	2. Bhopal	
3. Bombay	3. Jammu-Kashmir	3. Bilaspur	
4. Madhya Pradesh	4. Madhya Bharat	4. Cooch-Behar	
5. Madras	5. Patiala and East Punjab (PEPSU)	5. Coorg	
6. Orissa	6. Rajasthan	6. Delhi	
7. Punjab	7. Saurashtra	7. Himachal Pradesh	
8. United Provinces	8. Travancore-Cochin	8. Kutch	
9. W. Bengal		9. Manipur	
		10. Tripura	

However, the test was amended almost immediately to change the name of the United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh, to omit Cooch-Bihar from the list of Part 'C' States, and to add Vindhyan Pradesh to the list.

Part 'A' and Part 'B' States were regarded roughly as of equal status (Jammu-Kashmir was in a rather different status because of the disagreement with Pakistan over this territory), but Part 'C' States were definitely of lesser status, and were in fact administered by the President of India, through a Chief Commissioner or Lieutenant Governor. Executive power in Part 'A' States was exercised by a Governor, appointed by the President of India, in Part 'B' States the executive head – except in Jammu & Kashmir – was known as a Rajpramukh. The executive head of Jammu & Kashmir State was called the Sadar-i-Riyast. India, thus, emerged as an asymmetrical federation. “However, the territorial arrangement that the Constitution provided for the new state, was economically expensive, administratively inefficient, and geographically not consistent as the political boundaries between the political units of the various categories, however, appeared to be ‘ambiguous’. The internal political boundaries in most of the cases neither confirmed to the geographical features nor to the linguistic/cultural feature and/or patterns – some kind of ‘ramshackle pattern’ in the territorial administrative arrangement of the federation vis-à-vis the political organization of the space became more apparent and visible. Merger of territories with one another, particularly the territories of the erstwhile Indian States, disregarding the distinctiveness of human phenomena, was strongly resented by the communities that felt their loyalties being split. These ethnic communities with split territorial loyalties as well as the communities which were ‘subdued’ to the extent as to have been forced to abandon their regional expression as a result of ‘merger’ of their territories with other political units, initiated struggle for their recognition as separate entities” (Adhikari.2008: 68-69). As a matter of fact, in at least fifteen of the twenty-eight states/political units of India after independence more than 75 percent of the people spoke a single dominant language, and in Bombay State, with two dominant languages, 76 percent listed either Marathi or Gujrati as their mother tongue (Palmer. 1961:106).

In this background, the ‘right sentiments’, of the ‘subdued’ and/or ‘inexpressive’ ethnic communities emerged so violent, that it led to serious law and order problems in the regions being affected and raised a serious question on India’s *raison d’être*. In December, 1952, Potti Sriramulu, fasted unto death in Madras on the issue of a separate state for his people, and also for the recognition of the Telegu people as a separate cultural entity with a territorial identity. Ultimately, the Government of India, decided in principle to create a separate state of Andhra for the Telugu people. This new state came into existence in the fall of 1953.

It was in the background of the ‘struggle for recognition as separate entity’, in various regions of the Indian state, being carried forward by the

ethnic communities, the Government of India finally appointed a three-man State Reorganization Commission in 1953. The Commission took two years to prepare its report, thus giving time for passion to die down, on the one hand, and for advocates of the linguistic principle to state their case and organize for later activity, on the other (Palmer. 19

II

The foremost task before the Commission was the 'preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India, and in no way, India's reason of, and right to existence, in the world community of nations should not be jeopardized'. It expressed its strong opposition to excessive deference to linguistic/cultural feelings, for further 'emphasis on narrow loyalties by equating linguistic regions with political and administrative frontiers must diminish the broader sense of the unity of the country. However, the Commission recommended new linguistic/cultural states for Peninsular India, and it warned that further deferment of a general reorganization will cause dissatisfaction and disappointment (Report of the States Reorganization Commission, New Delhi.1955:45, 229-237). The Commission however, was not fair to the demands of the tribal people of central India and northeastern India. Though, the Commission recommended some territorial changes in the boundaries of Bombay State, but it opposed the division of the state, along the linguistic patterns. The Gujrati speaking people, however, were happy on the recommendation of the Commission, but the Marathi people expressed their dissatisfaction on the report and formed a united Maharashtra committee to press for a separate state of Maharashtra, including Vidarbha. In the face of Marathi-Gujrati conflict with regard to the future status of Bombay state vis-à-vis its division along the linguistic/cultural patterns, with the commission having opposed the division of the state, the working committee of the Indian National Congress came out with an alternative formula. It recommended that Bombay State could be divided into three states of Maharashtra, Gujrat and Bombay, but the Marathi people which maintained a demographic superiority in the Bombay Predency, rejected the formula, saying that the formula attempted to split the cultural territorial homogeneity of the Marathi territory.

After much confusion, and debates in the Congress Working Committee, the States Reorganization Bill was introduced in the Parliament. For this, **Seventh Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956, and States Reorganization Act of 1956** were resolved, and went into effect on November 01, 1956. After the reorganization, the Indian Republic consisted of 14 states of equal political status but with varying geographical size and 06 federally administered Union Territories. The distinction between Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D States disappeared (**Figure.04**). The linguistic /cultural reorganization of the political space of India however, brought about change in the contemporary political geography of the Union. However, not all the

recommendation of the Commission were endorsed and approved by the Parliament. Some changes had been made in the recommendation by the Government of India, in the light of the nature of the regionalistic movements in the different areas. The Commission had originally recommended 16 states and 03 Union Territories.

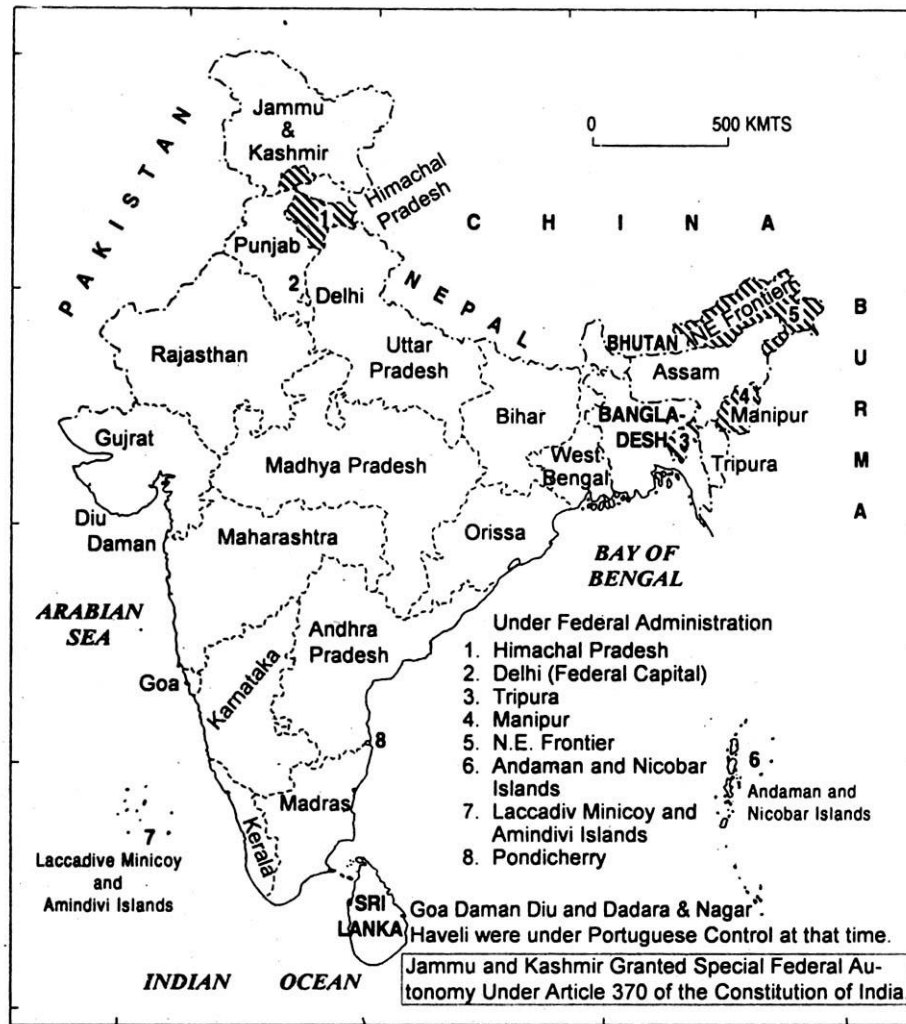


Figure: 4. Territorial Reorganization of Indian Republic: 1956 and disappearance of Part 'A', Part 'B' and Part 'C' States.

“Having in effect conceded the essentially linguistic basis of states reorganization, the Indian Government found that its decision was generally welcomed in the most part of the country, but definitely unpopular in linguistically Bombay and the Punjab” (Palmer.1961:108). The linguistic agitation, however, continued in Bombay State, and the Marathi-Gujrati cleavage further intensified and widened. Sensing the danger of strife, the Government of India introduced **Bombay Reorganization Act of 1960**, in the

Parliament and finally divided Bombay State into Maharashtra and Gujrat on May 01, 1960.

III

Though, the linguistic agitation died down in the Peninsular India, but the Nagas in the extreme northeast rose to revolt against the Indian State. In fact, the Nagas had long demanded their separation from Assam. They had pleaded before the Simon Commission as early as in 1929 for a separate nationhood. The Simon Commission however, disapproved their demand. Nevertheless the Nagas territory in Assam was declared as an 'Excluded Area', outside the scope of the central and provincial legislatures, by the British Government, as earlier in 1930.

In view of the violent nature of the Naga movement, particularly in the 'volatile' frontier region, adjacent to the erstwhile NEFA, the Government of India decided on the separation of the Naga area from Assam and created Nagaland, bifurcating Assam through the **13th Amendment Act, 1962 of the Indian Constitution**, Nagaland becomes the 16th state of the Union. Similarly, bilingual Punjab was finally split in 1967, through an amendment to the **constitution and Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966**, between Punjab and Haryana. Although, the division of Punjab appeared to have been carried forward along the linguistic patten, but the fact was, that the split of the territory was effected along the religious lines. The Hindu-area of the Punjab was carved out to be politically organized as Haryana, while the remaining Sikh-area continued to be called Punjab. The Haryana became the 17th state of the Union.

The Sikh had long striven for their recognition as a separate national community and demanded that their territory be organized accordingly. The migrant Sikhs who came after the partition had raised the slogan along with the local Sikh of East Punjab for a sovereign Sikh State on the lines of the Muslim League's demand for a separate and Muslim sovereign state in 1948. The Government of India, however, succeeded in containing the political reorganization of the Sikh-area into a political region/state for almost ten years. It was probably apprehended that the political reorganization of the Sikh-area along the religious/communal pattern soon after independence would have simply strengthened the movement for a separate and sovereign Sikh State in South Asia. Finding no way to get their desire of an independent Sikh State, fulfilled, the Sikhs finally agreed to represent and/or express their demand in the form of a Punjabi-speaking State inside the Indian Union.

Here, a distinction must be made between the demands of the major linguistic communities of the Peninsular India and the Sikh and the Nagas of the northwestern and northeastern India. While the Telugu, the Tamil, the Kannada, the Malayali, the Marathi and the Gujrati of the Peninsular India had never aspired for secession and independence, what they desired, was the

territorial (re)organization of their areas within the Indian Union so that their 'distinctiveness' could be perpetuated regionally, but the Sikhs and the Nagas had attempted to secure independence from the Indian rule. However, the Sikhs were finally contented and satisfied, when the Government of India (re)organized their area in 1967, but the Nagas have continued their struggle for separation and independence, despite being given the statehood with greater political autonomy. As a matter of fact, the Nagas have long waged a war against the Indian State for an independent Naga State.

The State of Assam experienced several territorial splits other than the creation of Nagaland. It consisted of a mosaic of different ethnic/tribal communities with varied 'genre de vie' and specific collectivities, and their existed mutual exclusiveness between them. Apart from the inter-ethnic/tribal rivalries, there were the rivalries between the people of the plain and the people of the mountain and hills. With the British withdrawal, most of the dominant ethnic groups in Assam sought for their separation from the Assamese control, and sought to perpetuate their recognition as separate ethnic/cultural entity. Inter-ethnic and inter-tribal cleavages hardened over time, and the successive attempts, by the Central and Regional Governments, to transform the cleavages into linkages failed.

The States Reorganization Commission however, rejected various proposals for creating autonomous hill states, but it did recommend that the role of district councils and the administrative relations between the tribal areas and the state government be re-examined (Weiner.1962:46). The Commission decided that the formation of a separate hill state in the Northeast was neither administratively feasible nor beneficial to the tribal people. It might also hinder the national integration of the newly formed Union (Sukhwai. 1985:56). With regard to the Commission's apprehension, it was believed that Commission was not aware of the ground realities of the regionalistic movements in different areas of Assam.

Assam had immense geo-strategic significance, on account of its location on the threshold of China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, with whom India's relations were not cordial. Moreover, on account of being a frontier, the Northeast had always remained a potential source of centrifugal tendencies. It was in the light of the fact that these Union Territories must achieve the statehoodness, in order to perpetuate their distinctiveness at the regional level vis-à-vis the national level that the **North East Areas Reorganization Act of 1972 (Twenty Seventh amendments to the Constitution)** was passed. As a result of this Act, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura emerged as States of the Union with a 'fair' amount of autonomy to decide the destiny of their people. The Act also carried forward the creation of the Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram, however, these two were given the statehoodness through the **constitutional Acts of 1986 (Fifty-third and the fifty-fifth amendments of 1986)**.

These amendments to the constitution to an extent, substantially pacified the feelings of the ethnic/tribal communities by recognizing them as 'nations and sub-nations', as they attained the statehoodness. The reorganization(s) which were designed to encourage the forces of integration/centripetal forces, necessarily achieved the purpose that the bond of relationship between the effective national territory and their frontier region strengthened to an extent.

However, there is every likelihood that the state of Assam may experience further ethnic/tribal-centric and language-centric splits in the coming years, particularly the Bodos and the Bengali-areas may be regrouped and/or reorganized into union territories within the Assam. The Karbi-Along tribal district in Assam is all set to get the status of a union territory, because the dynamism has acquired a new dimension with the transformation of 'Kinetic field', into a 'dynamic field' as the result of conflicts between state and the people of the district. Therefore, it can be said that the state of Assam is yet to get rid of intra-state regionalism vis-à-vis the territorial split and reorganization.

A protected state i.e. Sikkim joined as an associate state of the union through the **35th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1974**, and it became the full-fledged 22nd State of the Indian Union by the **Constitutional Amendment Act, 1975** passed by the Indian Parliament on April 26, 1975. Geopolitically and strategically, Sikkim is the most important state sandwiched between two unyielding neighbours, India and China, and was a buffer throughout its earlier history (Sukhwai.1985:60).

IV

The **56th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1987** attempted to reconstitute the territories, comprised in the Goa District of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu as the State of Goa and the Territories comprised in the Daman and Diu Districts of the Union Territory as the new Union Territory of Daman and Diu. Republican Constitution has been amended for several times, with the purpose of either creating a Union Territory or conferring statehood to a Union Territory or creating a new state. Several of the Union Territories were conferred statehood, or were elevated to the status of state. Himachal Pradesh which was earlier separated from the Punjab on the linguistic-cultural basis and made a Union territory finally it became a state of the Union.

Three more states were created in 2000, through a **Constitutional Amendments Act, passed in the Lok Sabha in 1999** raising the number of states to 28 and Union territories to 07. **(Figure.05)** The Union consists of 35 political units. Jharkhand and Chattisgarh have been created to give regional expression to the tribal distinctiveness. The Jharkhand movement was as old as the Naga movement (1929) while the tribal demand for the Chattisgarh State was a post-independence phenomenon.

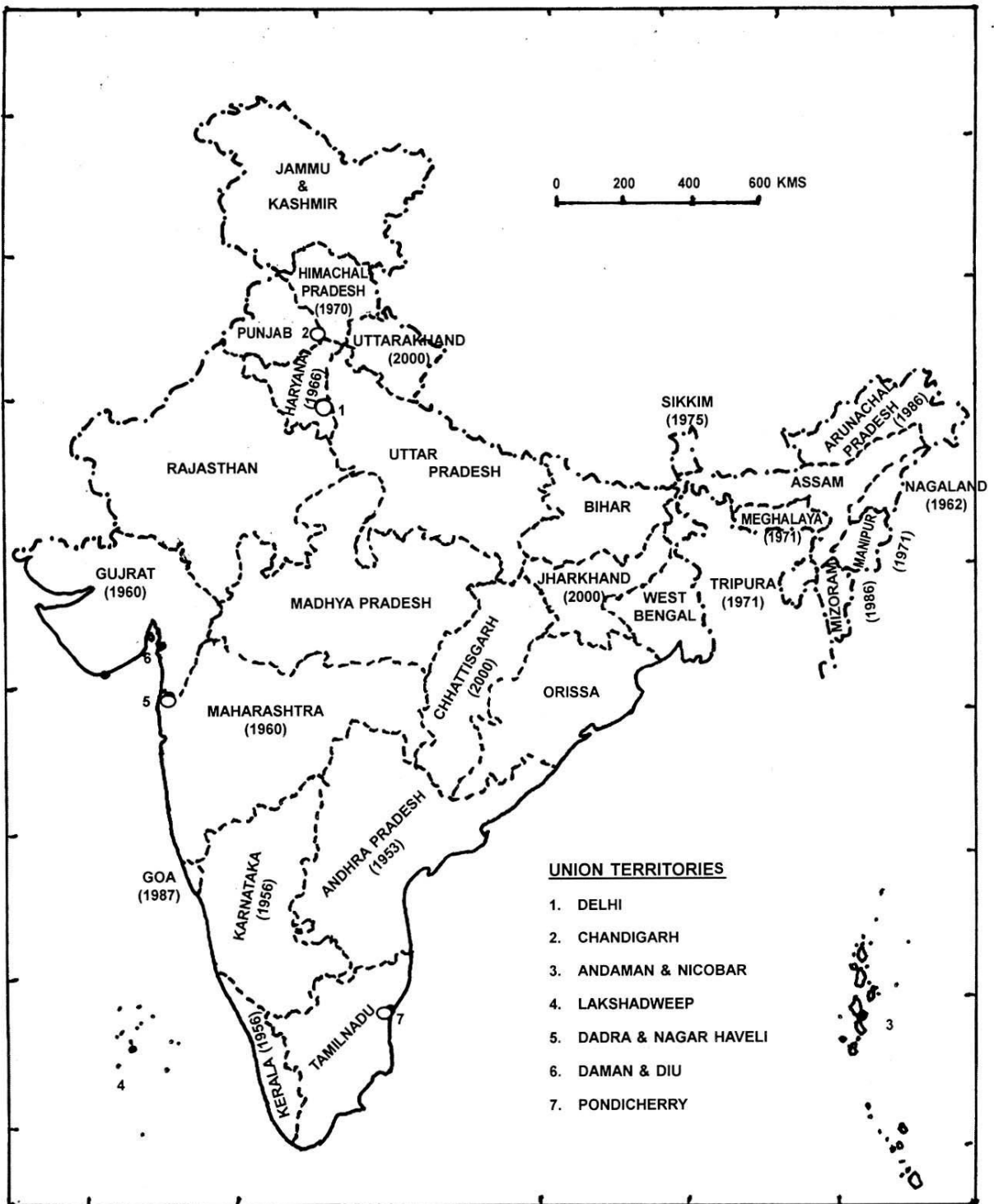


Figure. 5 INDIAN FEDERATION (2001)

The State Reorganization Commission had opposed the creation of the tribal state 'considering the political and administrative immaturity of the tribal people(s) to run the administration'. It probably, also, felt that tribal states would be politically, administratively, economically and culturally 'unviable'. Uttaranchal was created, comprising of the hill/mountain districts of the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas of Uttar Pradesh, along the caste pattern. It perhaps the only state in Indian Union, where the upper castes, particularly, the Brahmin hold the numerical demographic superiority over the other castes. The state has a very small concentration of the OBC population. Maximum care was taken in the delimitation process of the boundary of the state, so that the caste-dynamism could be maintained at the time of the demarcation of the boundary.

V

The Government of India, however, was not fair to the demand of the people of Telengana (Andhra Pradesh) and Vidarbha (Maharashtra) who have been striving hard, since long, for the reorganization, of their territories as separate 'entities' i.e. a political regions out of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra as well for economic reason. The people living in Telengana and Vidarbha belong to the ethnic stocks of the Telugu and Marathi, as those living in the other regions of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, speak the same language and share the 'genre de vie', then the question arise, what made them to demand for the reorganization of their territories as separate political-administrative entities? In fact, these two sub-regions of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had certain specific politico-historical-social experiences of exploitation and negligence which have tended to keep them neglected and ignored for long. As a result, the Telengana and Vidarbha demanded restructuring their territories on and/or along economic patterns and consideration. However, not even a single state of the Union has been created and/or reorganized purely on economic consideration, although economic factors were very much 'explicit' in linguistic-cultural-specific territorial movement in different areas of the Union. Great injustice has been done by the Central Government to the people of Telengana and Vidarbha for not having organized their territories into either into Union Territories or states, and reorganized them as separate politico-administrative entities, at par with other recently created states of the federation. However, there is every possibility of the creation of Telengana and Vidarbha, bifurcating Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in recent future. The Government of India cannot hold on the long pending demands of the people of these two regions.

There is a serious thinking, both at the national and regional levels to trifurcate the state of Jammu and Kashmir, into Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu, given the nature of long drawn political instability vis-à-vis the pattern of centrifugalism and cross-border terrorism, particularly in the Muslim Kashmir making it extremely difficult for the regional and federal governments as well, to carry out effective administration to contain terrorism and to create

confidence. A few years back, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, had prepared a blue-print for the trifurcation of the state along the cultural-religious territorial patterns, but it was opposed. However, the people of Ladakh and Jammu have never demanded the reorganization and separation of their territories, but given the 'ramshackle' nature of the political geography of the state, there is no alternative to this plan.

VI

The idea of linguistic states rested on the premise that these linguistic groups are sub-nations and/or nations (Karna.1999:85). This question, however, raised not only an intense debate but attracted sharp reactions from various parts of the country. It brought out two sharply contrasted and conflicting views with regard to the linguistic-cultural territorialization and reorganization of the union of India. Regionalistic movements in different regions and areas strengthened and gained momentum.

The entire agitation over linguistic States demonstrated that the Congress has opened a Pandora's Box, indeed, when it championed the principle of the reorganization of India on a linguistic basis, and it stimulated the divisive forces in India to such an extent as to raise doubts about the capacity of free India to survive as a unified state dedicated to democratic way (Harrison.1960). The concessions to linguistic demands have revealed the strength of regional as against national loyalties (Palmer.1961:108). The Linguistic Provinces Commission write: "An autonomous linguistic province.....means an autonomous linguistic state and an autonomous state means....that its territories are inviolate. And if in a linguistic province the majority language group comes to regard the territory of the entire province as exclusively its own, the time cannot be far distant when it will come to regard the minority living in that province and people living outside it as not their own. And once the stage is reached, it will only be a question of time for that sub-nation to consider itself a full nation (Indian Institute of Public Administration.1968:443).

Commenting against the creation of linguistic/cultural states, Dikshit (1982:166,168) point out: "As internal political boundaries have now coincided with the linguistic ones, the cleavage lines between the states have hardened and language has begun to play the divisive mischief.....ever since the creation of linguistic states fissiparous tendencies have raised their ugly heads, since often times these states may be considered by their domiciles as linguistic homeland of some type". The nature of danger involved in new separatism and centrifugal tendencies, as a result of politically consolidated linguistic communities was, also highlighted by Sukhwal (1985:52), when he say: "Linguistic states created a certain danger to the national unity, since they developed a feeling of regionalism, hindered economic cooperation between the states, sustaining antagonistic attitude among the neighbouring states.....the developing regional rivalries between linguistic states will certainly weaken the

overall national unity.....The formation linguistic states has retarded much planned economic development.....”

However, all predictions, apprehensions and fears that the reorganization of the Indian state would ultimately lead to the disintegration of the Union, have proved wrong, rather, the federation has emerged more stable and stronger from within. The process of “state-making” is still continuing, but it does not in any way weaken the state-structure vis-à-vis the national unity. The reorganization processes necessarily replaced the ‘conflictual pluralism’ by ‘organizational pluralism’, making the political structure vis-à-vis the federalism more geographically expressive and conducive. In fact, most Indian nations have only insisted on having a certain level of administrative and fiscal autonomy (Oommen.1999:10-15). It would be a fair judgment to say that the new states are on the whole more stable and are better fitted to carry out their responsibilities in building up a new nation (Despande.1957).

Conclusion:

India is a land of ethno-cultural diversities with territorial identification. Each ethno-cultural community whether merged with other ethno-cultural community or communities or individually has its own landscape culturally moulded over centuries, thereby reflecting a strong sense of territoriality (or attachment with its geographical space). British India consisted of Provinces and Indian States with different administrative structures as the former under the British rule and latter enjoying some kinds of political autonomy. India on being independent inherited both the Provinces and Indian States which acceded to Indian Dominion, but their legacy continued. On being a federation on January 26, 1950, the Indian State organized its political landscape with four types of administrative units – A B C D – according to their size and political relevance. But soon agitation started by the ethno-cultural communities seeking for their political organization so that they could protect their ethno-cultural distinctiveness. It began with the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953 out of Madras Presidency. The creation of Andhra Pradesh forced the Government of India to appoint the State Reorganization Committee in 1955. On the recommendation of the State Reorganization Committee 14 New States were created and older territorial system (ABCD) which the Republican Constitution had provided, were removed. Changes in the internal federal boundaries of the Union were effected through the bifurcation of the larger States that sought to give territorial identity to ethno-cultural communities so as to perpetuate their distinctiveness hitherto remained inexperience. The reorganization of federal boundaries or for that matter, the creation of cultural federation/cultural States or Union Territories was effected through successive amendments to the Constitution that exemplify landscape change across the political landscape of the Union of India. It is the regionalism i.e. the region-based loyalty that the different ethno-cultural communities have expressed time to time through movements which have

necessitated the internal federal boundary changes vis-à-vis reorganization of political landscape of the Union, but in no way such movements have weakened India's raison d'être rather region-specific movements or regionalism and all India nationalism co-exist together to sustain national unity and integrity.

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