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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Has the formation of linguistic States strengthened the cause of Indian Unity?

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Approach

- Start the answer by briefly stating the context of linguistic formation of states in India.
- Discuss the positives and challenges posed by linguistic formation of states to unity of India.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

At the time of independence in 1947, India consisted of british India and more than 500 princely states, which were merged together to form different states.

Initially, the grouping of states was done on the basis of political and historical considerations. However, in 1956 based on the Fazal Ali commission recommendation, the government started to reorganise the states on linguistic or cultural basis.

This linguistic reorganisation has strengthened the unity of the country but has put forward some challenges also.

Body

Positive effect of Linguistic formation of states:

- After the formation of states on linguistic basis the path to politics and power was now open to people speaking regional languages rather than the small English speaking elite or majoritarian hindi speaking northern India.
- Reorganizing the states on linguistic lines has strengthened the regional identities of diverse cultural entities in India. This has strengthened federalism in India.

Challenges posed by Linguistic formation of states:

- It has led to several unintended consequences such as regionalism, linguistic chauvinism and the foundation of the “Sons of the soil” doctrine.
- It has been used for divisive purposes and transformed into disruptive tendencies, such as communalism, casteism and linguistic or regional exclusiveness.
- The issues of jobs, educational opportunities, access to political power and share in the larger economic cake has fueled rivalries and conflicts based on religion, region, caste and language.
- Several issues that are a threat to India’s integrity have also emerged such as demand for new states on the basis of backwardness such as Marathwada and Saurashtra, ethnicity in the North East etc.

Conclusion

- Disputes over boundaries between different states, linguistic minorities and economic issues such as sharing of waters, and power and surplus food still persist.
- However, their decision to linguistically reorganize the states has removed one important factor that would've jeopardized India's integrity and thus strengthened the cause of Indian unity.