



Statehood Demand by Puducherry

For Prelims: States Reorganisation Act, Union Territory, Article-3.

For Mains: Constitutional Provisions related to the creation of new states and related issues.

Why in News

Recently, the Chief Minister of Puducherry has demanded Statehood for the **Union Territory (UT) of Puducherry**.

- The demand for Statehood is a long pending issue for Puducherry making it unable to exercise **any powers for creating employment potential** by inviting more industries to Puducherry and also **creating infrastructure facilities for tourism**.

Union Territory

- UT refers to those federal territories **that are too small to be independent or are too different** (economically, culturally and geographically) to be merged with the surrounding states or are financially weak or are politically unstable.
 - Due to these reasons, they **couldn't survive as separate administrative units and needed to be administered by the Union Government**.
- UTs are administered by the President. In the UTs **Lieutenant Governors are appointed by the President of India** as their administrators.
 - However, Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi are the exception in this regard and have an elected legislature and government due to the status of partial statehood.
- At present, **India has 8 UTs**-- Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - When the Constitution of India was adopted **in 1949, the Indian federal structure** included:
 - **Part A:** Former British India provinces that had a Governor and a legislature.
 - **Part B:** The former Princely States that were governed by a Rajpramukh.
 - **Part C:** Chief Commissioners' provinces and some princely states that were governed by Chief Commissioner.
 - **Part D:** Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands that was governed by a Lieutenant Governor who was appointed by the Central Government.
 - After the **States Reorganisation Act of 1956**, Part C and Part D states were combined into a single category of '**Union Territory**'. The concept of the UT was added by the

Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956.

▪ Reasons for Demand:

- **Linguistic and cultural reasons** are the primary basis for creating new states in the country.
- Other factors are:
 - Competition for local resources.
 - Government negligence towards certain regions
 - Improper allocation of the resources,
 - Difference in culture, language, religion, etc.
 - The economy's failure to create enough employment opportunities
 - Popular mobilization and the democratic political process is also one of the reasons.
 - 'The sons of the soil' sentiments.

▪ Issues Arising Due to Creation of New States:

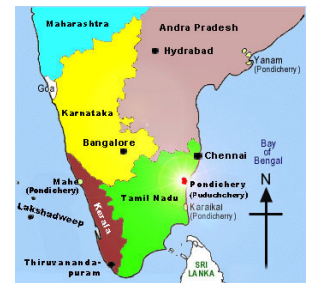
- Different statehood may **lead to the hegemony of the dominant community/ caste/ tribe** over their power structures.
- This can lead to **emergence of intra-regional rivalries** among the sub-regions.
- The creation of new states may also lead to certain negative political consequences like a **small group of legislators could make or break a government at will.**
- There is also a possibility of increase in the **inter-State water, power and boundary disputes.**
- The division of states **would require huge funds for building new capitals and maintaining a large number of administrators** as was the case in the **division of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.**
- Creation of smaller states only transfers power from the old state capital to new state capital **without empowering already existing institutions** like Gram Panchayat, District Collector, etc. rather diffusion of development in the backward areas of the states.

▪ Constitutional Provisions:

- The Indian constitution **empowers the Union government to create new states out of existing states** or to merge one state with another. This process is called reorganisation of the states.
- As per **Article 2** of the Indian Constitution, Parliament may by law admit into the Union, or establish, new States on such terms and conditions.
- **As per Article 3** of the Indian Constitution, the **Union Government has the power to form a State, increase or decrease the size** of any State, and alter the boundaries or name of any State.

Puducherry

- Puducherry city is capital of Puducherry UT in southeastern India.
- **UT was formed in 1962 out of the four former colonies** of French India:



- **Pondicherry** (now Puducherry) and **Karaikal** along India's southeastern Coromandel Coast, **Yanam**, farther north along the eastern coast, and **Mahe**, lying on the western Malabar Coast, surrounded by Kerala state.
- It originated as a **French trade centre in 1674**, when it was purchased from a local ruler.
- The colony of Pondicherry was **the scene of frequent fighting between the French and Dutch in the late 17th century**, and it was occupied several times by British troops. However, it remained a **French colonial possession** until it was transferred to India in 1962.

Way Forward

- **Economic and social viability** rather than political considerations must be given primacy.
- It is better to allow democratic concerns like development, decentralisation and governance rather than religion, caste, language or dialect to be the valid bases for conceding the demands for a new state.
- Apart from this the fundamental problems of development and governance deficit such as concentration of power, corruption, administrative inefficiency etc must be addressed.

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