# Linguistic Reorganisation of States

**Source: IE**

## Why in News?

The Tamil Nadu Governor's criticism of **India's linguistic reorganisation of states** has reignited the debate over the divisive nature of linguistic-based state creation, despite its role in **maintaining India's unity.**

## What is the Background of the Reorganisation of States in India?

- **Initial State Classification (1950-1956):** At independence, India inherited colonial-era boundaries with little coherence. The Constitution of 1950 classified states into four types: Part **A** (British provinces), **Part B** (princely states), **Part C** (smaller and chief commissioners' provinces), and **Part D** (Andaman & Nicobar).
  - This temporary setup soon led to demands for a more rational reorganisation.
- **Demand for Linguistic States:** The demand for states based on **language and cultural identity** grew, especially in South India.
  - **Sri Potti Sreeramulu's** death in 1952 after a hunger strike led to the creation of **Andhra State** (with coastal districts and Rayalaseema) in 1953 as the first linguistic state, carved out of Madras.
- **Government Response:** To handle growing demands, the India appointed:
  - **Linguistic Provinces Commission (Dhar Commission) (1948)**: Rejected language as a basis for states.
  - **JVP Committee (1949)**: The Committee, comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Pattabhi Sittaramaya, warned against linguistic reorganisation due to **fears of disintegration**. It prioritised national **unity, security.**
  - **States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) (Fazl Ali Commission) (1953)**: The SRC, headed by **Justice Fazl Ali with H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar** as members, submitted its report in 1955.
    - It accepted language as a **key factor but rejected the idea of 'one language, one state',** stressing the importance of **unity, security, and administrative, economic, and financial considerations.**
- **States Reorganisation Act (1956):** Based on the SRC's recommendations, the State Reorganisation Act of 1956 was enacted, reorganising India into **14 states and 6 Union Territories,** and abolishing the old Part A, B, C, and D classifications.
  - Later on many Indian states were carved out due to **regional identity demands** and the **need for better administrative efficiency**, economic development, and resource

control.

# REORGANISATION OF STATES IN INDIA

The States Reorganisation Commission set up in 1953, recommended the formation of 16 States and 3 UTs. However, under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, 14 states and 6 Union Territories (UTs) were formed. Today, India comprises 28 states and 8 UTs.

**1950**
States classified into **4 categories** - **Part A, B, C and D** (1st Schedule)

- **Part A -** Ruled by **Governor** with **elected State Legislature**
  - **Andhra Pradesh** (first state on linguistic lines) - 1953
- **Part B -** Former **Princely States**
- **Part C -** Former **Chief Commissioners' Provinces**, some **Princely states**
- **Part D -** Andaman and Nicobar Islands

**7th Constitutional Amendment (1956) -**

- Distinction between Part-A and Part-B states done away
- Part-C states were abolished
- Made total no. of (erstwhile) states - 14 and UTs - 6

## Reorganisation/Creation of States/UTs after 1956

**States Carved Out of Other States**

- **Gujarat** and **Maharashtra** from Bombay (Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960)
- **Nagaland** from Assam (State of Nagaland Act, 1962)
- **Haryana** from Punjab (Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966)
- **Meghalaya** from Assam (North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971)
- **Chhattisgarh** from MP (Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000)
- **Uttarakhand** from UP (Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000)
- **Jharkhand** from Bihar (Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000)
- **Telangana** from Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014)

**States Formed by Granting Statehood**

- **Himachal Pradesh** (State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 1970)
- **Manipur** and **Tripura** (North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971)
- **Sikkim** (36th Constitutional Amendment (1975))
- **Mizoram** (State of Mizoram Act, 1986)
- **Arunachal Pradesh** (State of Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986)
- **Goa** (Goa, Daman, and Diu Reorganisation Act, 1987)

**Formation of UTs**

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi, Lakshadweep - 1956
- Puducherry - 1962
- Chandigarh - 1966
- J&K and Ladakh - 2019
- Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu - 2020

**Drishti IAS**

# What are the Arguments in Favour of and Against the Linguistic Reorganisation of States?

## Arguments in Favour

- **Cultural Accommodation within Federalism**: Linguistic reorganisation respected India's vast cultural-linguistic diversity, aligning with democratic and pluralistic values.
  - Helped integrate regional aspirations into the constitutional framework, preventing alienation.

- **Defused Secessionist Tendencies**: Scholars argue that linguistic pluralism helped **contain secessionist tendencies,** unlike in **Pakistan (Bengali-West Pakistan conflict) and Sri Lanka (Sinhala-Tamil divide),** where forced linguistic uniformity led to violent conflict.
  - Linguistic Reorganisation Provided a safety valve for ethnic expression within the Indian Union.
- **Administrative Efficiency**: **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** recognised linguistic homogeneity aiding local governance and policy communication.
  - linguistic homogeneity facilitated education, judiciary, and bureaucracy in the regional language.
- **Political Representation and Empowerment**: Enabled the rise of strong regional parties which participated actively in national politics.
  - Strengthened democratic decentralisation and electoral participation.
- **Strengthened Unity through Diversity**: The principle of "unity in diversity" was upheld by allowing states to celebrate their language and culture **without threatening national cohesion.**

## Arguments Against

- **Rise of Regionalism and Linguistic Chauvinism**: An overemphasis on linguistic identity has, in some cases, led to the **exclusion of linguistic minorities within states** (e.g., non marathi speakers in Maharashtra).
  - This raises the risk of majoritarianism, where dominant linguistic groups suppress minority voices.
  - **Politicization** of linguistic identities by regional political parties often inflates the demands for **separate states,** capitalizing on the sentiments of local communities for political gain.
- **Inter-State Tensions and Border Disputes**: States like Maharashtra and Karnataka continue to dispute boundaries (e.g., **Belagavi issue**) rooted in linguistic claims.
- **Administrative Overload:** Constant demands for new linguistic or identity-based states (e.g., Tulu Nadu, Vidarbha) strain governance and national consensus.
- **Weakening of National Identity**: Critics argue that privileging regional identity could weaken the sense of pan-Indian nationalism, especially when state interests dominate national priorities.

# What Should be India's Future Strategy for Language Policy?

- **Promotion of Multilingualism:** No language should be imposed. The **Three-Language Formula** should be applied flexibly, allowing states to promote their own languages in education and governance.
  - Uphold constitutional recognition of **linguistic identity through the Eighth Schedule.** Implement the **National Education Policy, 2020** more effectively, promoting early education in mother tongues and multilingualism.
  - Enforce **Articles 29 and 30** to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities in education and culture.
- **Inter-State Cultural Exchanges**: Strengthen programs like **'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'** to foster mutual respect across linguistic regions.
- **Address Linguistic Exclusion Within States:** Rising sub-nationalism and exclusion of linguistic minorities need redressal through inclusive language policies at the state level.
- **Multilingual Administrative Systems**: Encourage multilingual signage, forms, and official communication especially in linguistically diverse states.
  - Promote **Bhashini** to make governance and digital content available in all Indian languages.

# Conclusion

India's future lies in a **multilingual, consultative, and inclusive federalism. Language should unite, not divide.** Policy reforms must balance **cultural autonomy with national integration,** using constitutional safeguards and modern tools like Bhashini. This ensures that India's federalism adapts with dignity and fairness to its vast diversity.

# UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. Which one of the following was given classical language status recently? (2015)**

(a) Odia

(b) Konkani

(c) Bhojpuri

(d) Assamese

**Ans: (a)**

**_Mains:_**

**Q.** Has the formation of linguistic states strengthened the cause of Indian unity? **(2016)**

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