

HSS 239 : Term Paper

In Favour of Creation of Smaller States in India

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From decades since Independence , we have been taught that “*India is a vast land of diversity*” or “ *India is a perfect example of Unity in Diversity* ” and many more statements or lines which favour the fact that India is a very diverse country . Since a decade ago , India already had 28 states which is a high number considering the size of our motherland . This gives us something to think about ! That the bifurcation of states or distribution of states has it's origin in the history of these states . Thus , it is not just the people of the country but also, it's very states that are diverse entities in themselves .

To ponder over this , let's dive a little bit in **history of states** . At the time of independence, India comprised of more than 500 provinces and princely states. With independence also came partition. Under the British supervision, several Indian provinces were divided. Bengal was one of the most crucial provinces to be divided- 'sliced' into two. Eastern Bengal became East Pakistan, while Western Bengal remained within the Indian territory. On the West, Punjab was divided into East Punjab and West Punjab. West Punjab was given to newly-formed Pakistan, eastern Punjab stayed with India. Bombay province was divided into two- Bombay and Sind province. The latter became a part of Pakistan, the former retained in India . Central provinces and Berar were merged to form the province of Madhya Pradesh, while United Provinces was formed by merging Rampur, Banaras, and Tehri Garhwal. Apart from this , there was a demand of separate state by many linguistic/dialectic communities , thus more states were divided on the basis of regionalism , caste and politics during post independence . India in it's colonial times had many provinces each separated by territorial markings of the kings and rulers . The British believed in “ *Divide and Rule Policy* ” which they inculcated in the minds of Indian rulers before leaving India which resulted in separate state for almost each province . Therefore, history and diversity reasons the 28 states and 6 union territories India had after Independence.

Having seen the history of Bifurcation of States , many territorial changes were made post independence and in the new Millenium according to demands , shaping the **map of India of today** . The Indian 'model' of federalism has several marked differences from the classical federal models one finds in countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia.



One notable difference has been the unilateral power of the union parliament to reorganize the political structure of the country by forming new states and to alter the areas, boundaries or names of existing states. Despite having the constitutional power, overwhelming concern for nation building and economic reconstruction based on the development planning model, initially dissuaded the national leadership from conceding to demands for the creation of smaller regional states. Even states formed based on language, an accepted basis of the formation of independent nation-states in 19th century Europe. Only after India witnessed popular unrest, were linguistic states created in the late fifties and sixties, and this process remained incomplete. During the next three decades, only some of the centrally administered Union Territories were upgraded to full fledged states while longstanding demands for the smaller states like Vidarbha, Saurashtra, Telangana, and Jharkhand remained in limbo.

The advent of new millennium saw the creation of three new states - Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand (originally named Uttarakhnad) and Jharkhand, carved out from the parent states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. More recently, India has witnessed a renewed assertion from historically constituted regions for the creation of smaller states.

“*The creation of Telangana*” resulted in the surfacing of old and dormant demands. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced that it was in favour of a separate state of Vidharba to be carved out of Maharashtra. Mayawati has several times expressed a view that Uttar Pradesh needs to be broken into smaller states. Even in Tamil Nadu, Dr. S. Ramadoss of the Pattal Makkali Katchi (PMK), a very regional political party, has mooted a bifurcation of the state, with the northern districts being carved out to form a separate state. Historically, too, there is some basis to this as the Tamil-speaking region in the past comprised kingdoms centred around Kanchipuram and Tanjore/Madurai. Jayalalithaa shrilly denounced this demand as “*secession*,” when the PMK had only asked for a smaller state within the Indian Union. The Chennai-centred Tamil Nadu state we now know was the creation of the British.

Significantly, some of these regions have enormous populations comparable to countries of the global north in terms of territory and population. The regions include Telangana in Andhra Pradesh; Gorkhaland and Kamtapur in West Bengal; Coorg in Karnataka; Mithilanchal in Bihar; Saurashtra in Gujarat; Vidarbha in Maharashtra; Harit Pradesh, Purvanchal, Braj Pradesh and Awadh Pradesh in Uttar Pradesh; Maru Pradesh in Rajasthan; Bhojpur comprising areas of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh; Bundelkhand

comprising areas of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, a greater Cooch Behar state out of the parts of Assam and West Bengal.

India today in 2019 is witnessing the **demand for smaller states** and thus a shift in federal ideology . Three developments mark the shift in India's federal ideology. First, regional identity, culture, and geographical differences now appear to be better recognized as valid bases for administrative division and political representation as democracy deepens and widens. Second, smaller states are being proposed on the grounds of good governance and development rather than merely on the linguistic or cultural principle was the case of the first two phases of reorganization. Third, recently even dialect communities have been asking for their own 'Territorial Homeland' while underlining the cultural and literary distinctiveness and richness of the dialect (Bundelkhand).

The last few years have seen a constant tug of war between the champions of smaller states and larger states. The centre has received demands for India have at least 50 states including a separate Mithilanchal in Bihar, Saurashtra in Gujrat, Coorg or, Kodagu in Karnataka, Gondwana in Madhya Pradesh, Mahakosal in Orissa, Bodoland in Assam, Gorkhaland in West Bengal, Vidharba in Maharashtra, Bundelkhand in U.P. and M.P., Harit Pradesh and Poornanchal in U.P. Mayawati even proposed to divide Uttar Pradesh into four smaller states – Purvanchal, Bundelkhand, Awadh Pradesh and Pashchim Pradesh.

Demand for separate states is not new. Recent agitation by “**Gorkhaland**” activists brought the issue again into the lime light. Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts, particularly the hill portion excluding the southern tehsils of Phansidewa, Kharibari, Siliguri and Matigara, have been in a politically driven near-total civic upsurge since June 12. The provocation was the May 16 decision by West Bengal government to institute a three-language formula in school education throughout the state. Under the formula, Bengali will be compulsorily taught up to Class X, although students would not have to take an examination in the subject. The Bimal Gurung led Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM), which wields substantial political influence over the nearly five lakh Nepali-speaking Gorkha people inhabiting the two districts, is spearheading the ongoing protests . It considers the West Bengal government's decision a threat to the Gorkha ethno-cultural identity and socio-economic interests. Although the West Bengal government has now withdrawn the controversial order, the GJM has revived an earlier demand for statehood for the Gorkha people. Further, GJM members have not only resigned from the

Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) but the party along with 12 other Gorkha outfits has also decided to render the institution of the GTA nonfunctional by preventing the holding any further elections to the body. The present Gorkhaland movement is a search and a fight for this lost identity. Only a separate state can give them this identity and nothing less.

MAP DEPICTING THE REGIONS IN THE PROPOSED GORKHALAND STATE

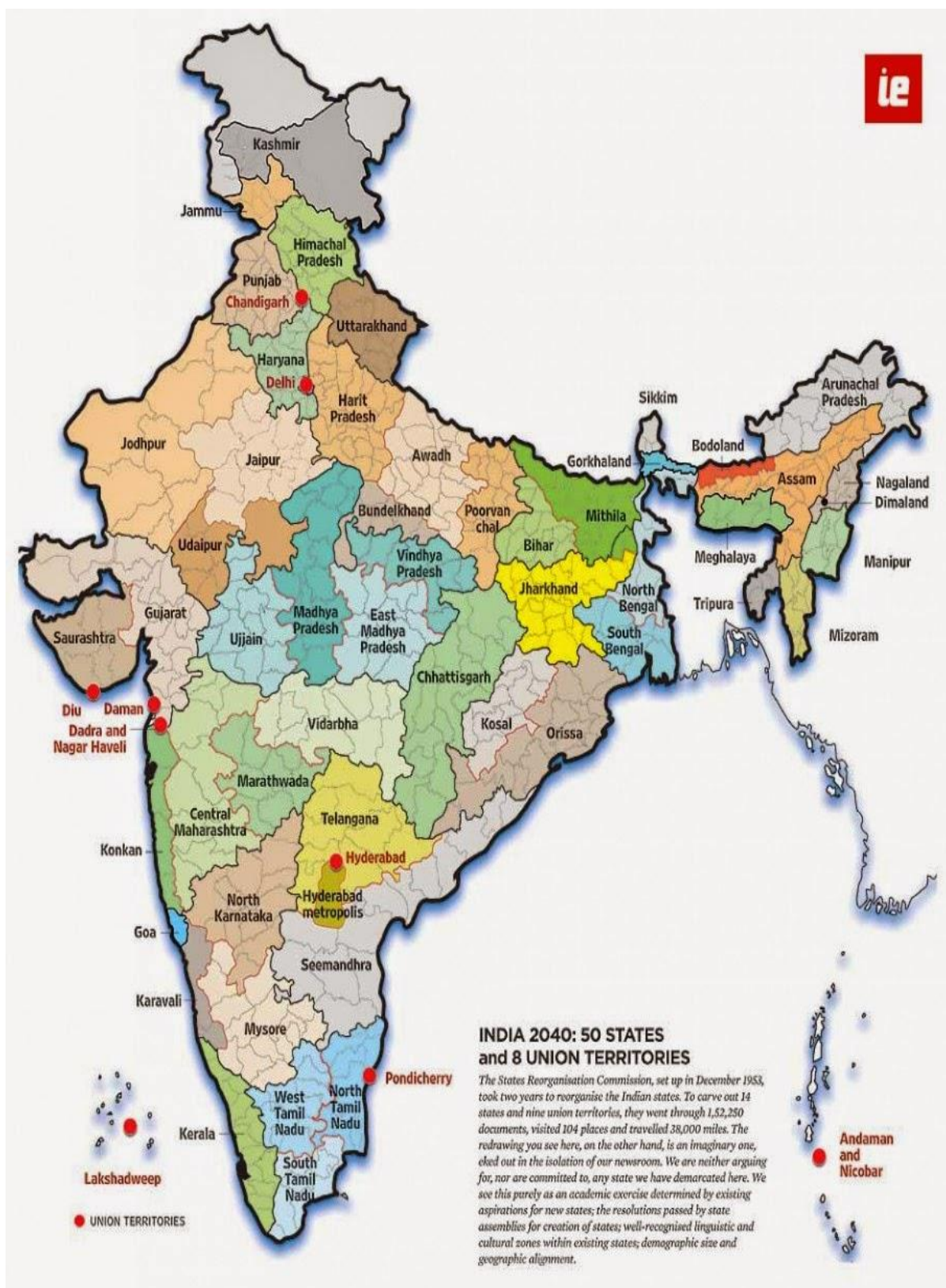


“India is a Union of states” - Article 1 of Indian Constitution. This means that states were created for administrative convenience. States have no right to separate from the union and hence state do not have a say in their creation. So , firstly one needs to understand the question **‘Why is there demand for smaller states ?’** . The demands for a separate state rose because of underdevelopment of certain regions of the country. There are many factors which account to the answer - The issue of language and culture which had shaped the earlier process of reorganization shifted to those of better governance and greater participation, administrative convenience, economic viability in the developmental needs of sub regions. The lack of industry, an agrarian crisis and a low level of infrastructural facilities push such States into adopting a model of development where growth can be achieved in spite of these handicaps. This, as we witnessed with the examples of the three smaller States, results in an unprecedented exploitation of raw materials such as the mining of minerals instead of the creation of industry, wanton land deals, a boost to the construction industry and the conversion of fertile agricultural land into speculative real estate transactions, since agriculture in any case was untenable and non-profitable. It’s a well-known fact that creation of smaller state in India had experiences the betterment of Indian economy. The growth of GDP, better governance and development. Therefore, creation of smaller states is the immediate needs for the development of Indian democracy . Regional issues such as a, person belonging to another sect may not be in confrontation with a person the resident of the same state but different province and prejudices will decrease and more people of the same small state and same province will have a say in their state affairs.

Therefore , it is for national benefit that smaller states are formed. We need to know, why should smaller states be formed in the first place, before understanding its consequences. There are certain parameters for creation of a new state, these can be categorised as following. There should be a proper machinery set up in the state that can carry out administrative functions after formation of a new state. The regions which are taken for formation of the new state should have similarity, keeping heterogeneous culture under one label will create a problem. The state should have the resources which can make it economically viable to survive on its own revenue. Ultimately, the country belong to its people, so people’s aspiration should be given a due share in the making of a new state.

Does India need smaller states? Let us consider the following arguments in favour. First, the argument that '*Small is Beautiful*' does find resonance in the developmental experiences of the newly created smaller states. Factual analysis shows the development and efficiency argument does work in favour of the new states when compared with the parent states. During the tenth five-year plan period, Chhattisgarh averaged 9.2 percent growth annually compared with 4.3 percent by Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand averaged 11.1 per cent annually compared with 4.7 percent by Bihar, and Uttarakhand achieved 8.8 per cent growth annually compared with 4.6 percent by Uttar Pradesh. Arguably, getting '*A Territory of Their Own*' unleashes the suppressed growth potentials of the peripheral regions. Second, comparatively smaller but compact geographical entities tend to ensure that there is better democratic governance, as there is greater awareness among the policy makers about the local needs. Smaller units having linguistic compatibility and cultural homogeneity also allow for better management, implementation and allocation of public resources in provisioning basic social and economic infrastructure services. A relatively homogeneous smaller state allows for easy communicability, enabling marginal social groups to articulate and raise their voices. Third, smaller states provide gains for the electorates in terms of better representation of their preferences in the composition of the government. In a patronage based democracy like in India, the amount of the transfer of state resources a constituency gets depends crucially on whether the local representative belongs to the ruling party. Understanding this electoral logic of patronage distribution, the electorates of a smaller region have a propensity to elect representatives with preferences more closely aligned to those of the bigger region within the state. Such a motive, however, would no longer operate once the region constitutes a separate state.

After understanding the need and demand for creation of smaller states in India, it's important to look into the administrative, economic and developmental implications of the same. The **Implication of bifurcation of states** are as follows – Administratively, It will be easier and better to administer a small region. It will have a direct eye from the head of state, i.e. CM. Smaller region will get better control and grip on minute issues of development, more specificity in administration is possible then. Economically, development needs to be given its due share. Actually, liberal thinking explains it more clearly. Formation of states gives more funds to a smaller region, and hence people expect more development as there is direct relation between formation of smaller state and improvement in the economic conditions. There can be better evaluation of natural resources, which was not present earlier. As seen during formation



The States Reorganisation Commission, set up in December 1953, took two years to reorganise the Indian states. To carve out 14 states and nine union territories, they went through 1,52,250 documents, visited 104 places and travelled 38,000 miles. The redrawing you see here, on the other hand, is an imaginary one, ched out in the isolation of our newsroom. We are neither arguing for, nor are committed to, any state we have demarcated here. We see this purely as an academic exercise determined by existing aspirations for new states; the resolutions passed by state assemblies for creation of states; well-recognised linguistic and cultural zones within existing states; demographic size and geographic alignment.

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of Chattisgarh, it was the energy generating source of M.P. Chattisgarh benefitted a lot as now it was selling the same electricity to M.P. which was free earlier. Mostly it depends on political will and the government, how much they want to utilise them for development. Other resources like handicrafts, native culture of the place may get boost as a smaller state will get a different identity and more interest for its uniqueness. This may bring about development of the backward classes of the society too, as the focus will be on smaller number of people. More avenues for employment will be open in the state with more infrastructure, as it has been formed recently. Development will be a mixture of social, economic, political and other factors, it will be the end result. According to simple theory, it is easily concluded — smaller state—more funds—better spending—more vigilance—more development. It can be boon for the smaller region as it do not need to take load of the complete region. Now, a small state can develop based on its own resources.

Concluding the way out, it is implied that creation of smaller states will lead to a better developed India where every linguistic region, caste or backward classes will have an equal say in political, economic and educational affairs of the country towards a better future. It would be unfortunate, therefore, if demands for restructuring of India by creating smaller states is seen only as a mere political contest, where the just cause of individual socio-cultural and agro-climatic regions is a weapon in the hands of out of work politicians deprived of a share of the benefits of office. The creation of smaller states demands that the government needs to handle the issue by better political governance, fiscal management and rule of law. Rather, division of states calls for a thorough evaluation of physical features like land equality and topography, agro-climatic conditions, socio-cultural factors, natural and human resource availability, density of population, means of communication, existing administrative culture and effectiveness of its district and regional administrative units and so on. It is a time for a Second States Reorganization Commission that can redraw Indian Federal map, creating many smaller states and keeping in mind economic viability. The current demand for the breaking up of larger states needs to be examined seriously and dispassionately in its historical and contemporary context. A more effective autonomous institution could also be considered in the form of an empowered body statutorily on par with 6th Schedule areas and assigned, say, all the functional areas under the State List except law and order, maintenance of infrastructure like national and state highways, power transmission networks and disaster relief establishment.

States have been given '*special status*' by the central government. States are provided monetary help irrespective of their size, but still they figure low on development. Reducing the size of states can't be a panacea for all problems concerning underdevelopment, language differences, regional identity, etc. of a people. Such a solution will only create differences between people. But it is also easy to overcome these differences. It will require a strong commitment on both sides of people and the government to devise other ways to solve these problems and to work for good of all. Good government also means lesser government, responsive government, closer government and quicker government. Large centralised governments are inimical to good government. State governments are the worst kind of centralised governments masking their regional jingoism as a demand for autonomy.

In 1973, Rasheeduddin Khan wrote - "*the process of the infra-structuring of the Indian federation is not yet over. Therefore, political demands of viable sub-regions for new administrative arrangements are not necessarily antithetical to the territorial integrity of the country. For, every urge for autonomy is not a 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 re-integration.*"

The Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1955 states - "*Unlike the United States of America, the Indian Union is not an indestructible union composed of indestructible states. But on the contrary the Union alone is indestructible but the individual states are not.*"

Therefore, likely said small states are a must if we have to keep the republic healthy and strong . It is implied that creation of smaller states will lead to a better developed India where every linguistic region , caste or backward classes will have a equal say in political , economic and educational affairs of the country towards a better future .

