

Language as a Divisive factor

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Description of Module

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Language as a Divisive factor:

The communication is essential for human beings. Interactions among people are possible because of communication. Language facilitates to communicate. Thus language forms a very important part in human life. Every human society has its, own language. Indian society is a unique society. India is a land of linguistic diversities. There are many languages in India. It is considered that **Sanskrit** is the mother of all Indian languages. After independence the government felt that the best way of **reorganizing states** was on the basis of language.

Prelude of Linguistic States:

Administrative units: Initially the country was divided into administrative units to A, B and C Categories. This was found unsatisfactory and hence another category 'D' was added. But people believed that this division negative the principle of equal rights guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution.

Linguistic states: The problem of administrative reorganization was further complicated by the growing demand for formation of states on the basis of linguistic **political pressure** for

establishing linguistic states. The government of India was **bound by the public** opinion for division of states on linguistic basis. In the Telugu area communists set up the slogan “Andhra for Telugus”. Similarly Marathi speaking people wanted a separate state. Gujarat is claimed a separate state for themselves. Sikhs demanded a state for themselves. Thus in order to meet the demands of public, states was reorganized on the basis of language.

225 distinct : The languages of India are many. Linguistic surveys show a list of **225 distinct** languages. Sardar **Vallab Bahi Patel**, played a significant role in amalgamating the states into Union of India. In 1956 the states were reorganized on the basis of language.

National language Hindi : At present Hindi has been recognised as the national language. This has given rise to a lot of fighting particularly in the southern part. Though the Constituent Assembly accepted Hindi as the official language there was a prolonged controversy. Even at present Hindi is not very much accepted by the South Indians.

Problems: Linguism in India gained momentum during freedom struggle. The freedom fighters felt that the British system of division of the country was not appropriate. The idea of division of India on the basis of languages was considered as a better strategy. But the reform of states on linguistic basis has created serious problems.

linguistic division of states can be analysed as follows:

1. Regionalism:

Linguism has promoted **local identity**. It has created distinctiveness among people. The regional differences have come in the way of national integration.

2. Exploitation of people by Politicians:

Language has evoked **psychological and emotional feelings** among people. Politicians are promoting the spread of only particular languages through monetary inducements. They exploit the sentiments of people at the time of election.

3. Erosion of national feeling:

Linguistic loyalty has come in the way of national integration. People are much concerned about the **regional gains**, than the interest of the nation. Thus **interstate boundary dispute, river dispute** have become common.

4. Emergence of regional Political Parties:

Linguism has resulted in the formation of regional political parties. At the present juncture these **regional parties are playing a crucial** role in the formation of government at the centre and also at some states. This has caused the Problem of **political instability in the** country. It has even increased the **cost of election**.

5. Demand for separate states:

Extreme sense of Linguism has caused linguistic conflicts. Such conflicts are quite often supported by politicians. E.g: Demand for a separate state by people of “north Karnataka” region.

6. Threat to sovereignty:

Linguism is posing a severe threat to **the integrity of the country**. On the basis of language people have become more self centered without thinking of the progress of the country. In Some states the regional **language is being used even for administrative** purposes, which causes a major problem to people who do not belong to that particular state.

Recommendations of Sarkaria Commission:

In 1983, Sarkaria Commission was constituted to look in to the language problem in India and suggest measures. The Commission was headed by R.S. Sarkaria. The Commission made the following recommendations:

1. Three language formula: It included the implementation of regional language, Hindi and English at the school level education.
2. English was to be retained as the official language.
3. Reorganisation of states into administrative units.
4. Ban on Political parties and other organisations trying to promote Linguism.

The Language and regionalism are also divisible factor in the society. The constitution of India provides 22 languages specified. These languages protect our culture but on the other hand divided the society into groups. Ex: Hindi language in south. Every state and its people are duty bound to develop their local language and for this purpose our constitution is not limiting the languages.

Ex: **South covered by Telugu and Malayalam**, East covered by Bengali and Assamese and North covered by Hindi and Punjabi west covered by Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi and central India is speaking Hindi.

National language: The constitution and various other government documents are purposely vague in defining such terms as **national languages and official languages** and in distinguishing either one from officially adopted **regional languages**.

States are free: to adopt their own language of administration and educational instruction from among the country's officially recognized languages, the Scheduled Languages. All citizens have the right to primary education in their native tongue.

Sole official national language: As drafted, the constitution provided that Hindi and English were to be the languages of communication for the central government until 1965, when the switch to Hindi was mandated. The Official Languages Act of 1963, pursuing this mandate, said that Hindi would become the sole official national language in 1965. English, however, would continue as an "associate additional official language."

Redrawing of State Boundaries: The Congress was committed to redrawing state boundaries to correspond with linguistics. The States Reorganisation Commission, which was formed in 1953 to study the problems involved in redrawing state boundaries, viewed language as an important, although by no means the sole, factor. Other factors, such as economic viability and geographic realities, had to be taken into account.

Minority in their traditional homeland: The violence that broke out in the state of Assam in the early 1980s reflected the complexities of linguistic. (The state has a significant number of **Bengali-speaking Muslims**. The Muslims came in response to a British-initiated colonization plan to bring under cultivation land left fallow by the Assamese. By the 1931 census, the Assamese not only had lost a bulky portion of their land but also had become a disadvantaged minority in their traditional homeland. They represented less than 33 percent

of the total population of Assam, and the Muslim immigrants (who accounted for roughly 25 percent of the population) dominated commerce and the government bureaucracy.

Linguistic Reorganization of States

Centre state relations: The process of linguistic reorganization of states in India was far more prolonged and divisive than the controversy over the official language of India and raised more fundamental questions of centre state relations. The first step in the process occurred in the aftermath of a major movement in the Andhra region of the old Madras Presidency. Following the States Reorganization Act of 1956, the boundaries of the southern states was reorganized in closer conformity with traditional linguistic regions.

Ex: The bifurcation of Bombay province into the present state of Gujarat and Maharashtra followed in 1960. In 1966, Punjab was reorganized and its several parts distributed among three units: the core Punjabi Suba, the new state of Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh. Several new states also have been carved out in response to tribal demands in the North-Eastern region of the country from time to time.

Conflict Internal boundaries: Many Indian leaders proclaimed their goals after Independence to be the establishment of a strong state. Out of the conflict which developed between the central government leaders, successive demands of leaders of language movements for reorganization of the internal boundaries of the provinces.