

NEXT IAS

HISTORY OF POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA

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History of Post Independence India

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CHAPTER

1

NEHRUVIAN ERA

1.1 Integration of India

India had achieved its Independence after a long struggle and sacrifices of many freedom fighters. After the revolt of 1857, freedom fighters emerged from every nook and corners of the nation. Many times, freedom fighters disagreed on means to be used to attain freedom, for instance some favoured Satyagraha, whereas others preferred use of force (example-Indian National Army). But they all realized that for India to emerge out of her debilitating and pitiful situation, freedom must be attained. At the time of Independence, India was facing many problems like communal violence, partition and resettlement of displaced people, division of armed forces and bureaucracy as a result of partition, a weak economy, depleted resources, need of stability at political front, etc. One of the major issues was the integration of princely states without which the dream of one country would have remained unfulfilled. At the time of independence, India consisted majorly of British Indian territories, which were directly administered by the Britishers and the princely states, which were 565 in number. Before independence, although princely states enjoyed considerable freedom in the internal affairs, the British crown exercised paramount power over the states.

Classification of Indian States

After Independence, the paramountcy of the British crown lapsed on these princely states, and they were free to join either Pakistan, or India, or to stay independent. Many of the larger princely states began to dream of independence and to scheme for it. They claimed that the paramountcy could not be transferred to the new states of India and Pakistan.

They got further encouragement from M.A. Jinnah who publicly declared on 18 June 1947 that "the states would be independent sovereign states on the termination of paramountcy, and were free to remain independent if they so desired."

It was quite formidable task to integrate all these princely states with the newly independent Indian Union. However, under the skillful leadership of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, most of the princely states were integrated with the Indian

Union using both persuasion and pressure. But three states, that is Junagarh, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir posed problems for quite some time.

Other than simplifying the political organization of India, the territorial integration of princely states brought uniformity, simplicity and viability in the units. Thus, when the constituent assembly adopted the constitution, the constitution contained the following four categories of states in the first schedule.

Part A States

Former provinces of British India, Ruled by an elected Governor and state legislature.

With a population of 19 million, 216 states were merged with the neighboring British Indian provinces and were designated as Part A states. These included: (1) Assam (2) Bihar (3) Bombay (4) Madhya Pradesh (5) Madras (6) Orissa (7) Punjab (8) Uttar Pradesh (9) West Bengal.

Part B States

Former Princely States

With a population of about 35 million, 275 states were integrated to create new viable administrative units and were designated as Part B states. These included: (1) Hyderabad (2) Jammu and Kashmir (3) Madhya Bharat (4) Mysore (5) PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) (6) Rajasthan (7) Saurashtra (8) Travancore-Cochin.

Part C States

Former Chief Commissioners Provinces and some Princely states.

61 princely states, not covered under above categories due to their special conditions, were constituted into Centrally Administered areas and were called Part C states. These included: (1) Ajmer (2) Bilaspur (3) Bhopal (4) Coorg (5) Delhi (6) Himachal Pradesh (7) Kutch (8) Manipur (9) Tripura and (10) Vindhya Pradesh.

Part D States

Administered by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by Central Government.

The islands of Andaman and Nicobar were placed under a separate category called the Part D state.



Integration of Princely States

The relationship of the princely states with the British India had been the product of different treaties signed with the British East India Company and the British Crown, which gave the British Raj varying degrees of control over foreign, inter-state relations and defence. This happened over the course of a century.

Rulers of the princely states had accepted the suzerainty of Britain in India. Also, these princely states were represented in the Imperial Legislative Council and the Chamber of Princes. Thus, the princes maintained a channel of influence with the British Raj.

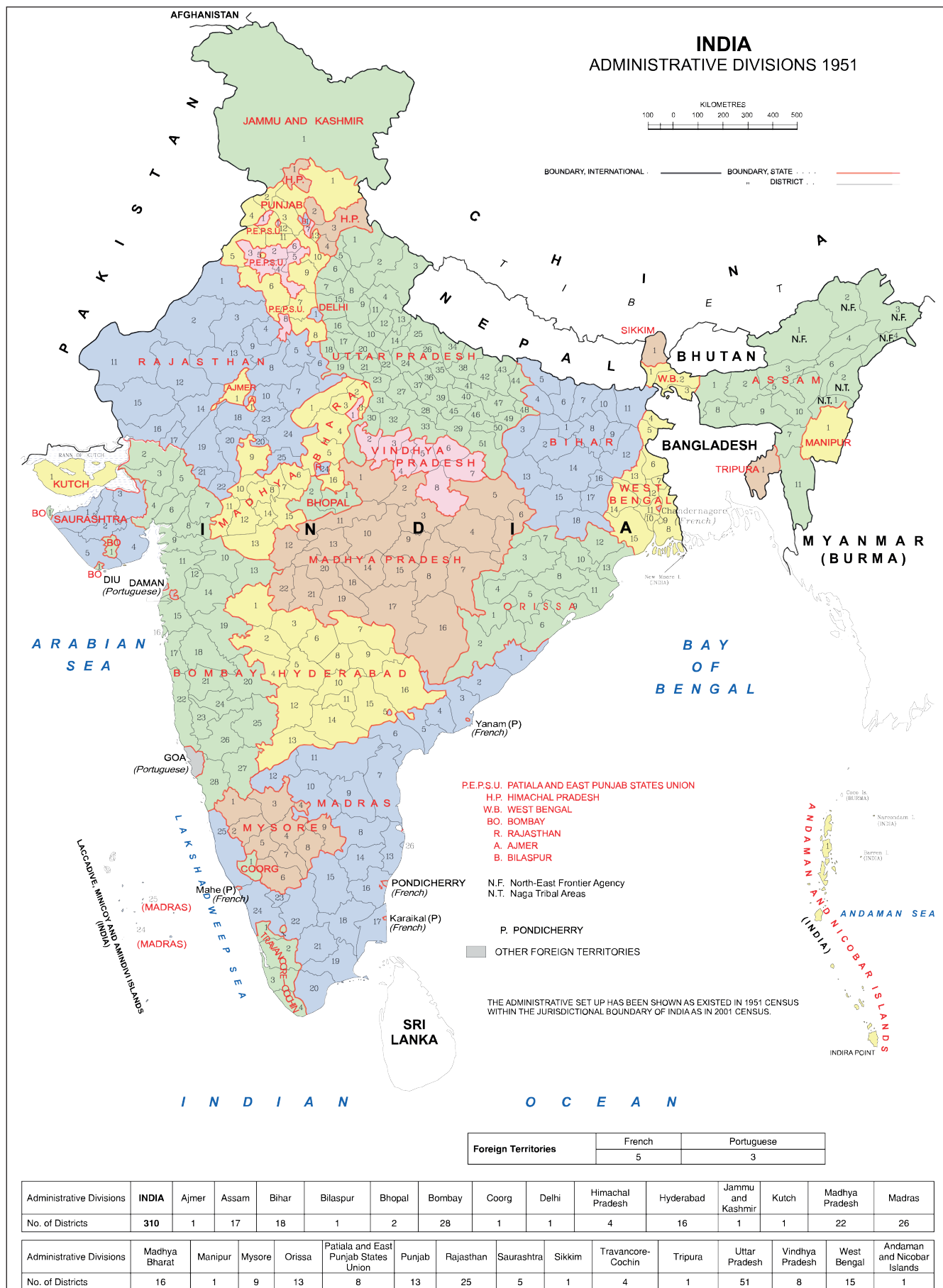
In the run-up to independence, the important question that emerged was the nature and shape of the new state or states that would replace the British Raj. The demand for the partition to create Pakistan was the central issue, though it was not the only one. However, the 'partition plan' did not deal with the fate of the princely states, as it confined itself only with the provinces.

Though the rulers of princely states were technically free to join either Dominion, there were certain geographical considerations which could not be wished away. Out

of something like 565 states, the vast majority were irretrievably linked geographically with the Dominion of India. Even after the Congress leadership agreed to partition and to the establishment of Pakistan, the political geography of the new Indian state remained unclear. Before the Independence, the development of trade, commerce and communication had bound the princely states with the British India through complex agreements. Without integration of the Princely states, after the Independence, agreements relating to railways, customs, irrigation, use of ports, etc would lapse and thus, would have created a chaotic situation. At the same time, the people of these princely states had also, participated in the freedom struggle and wished to integrate with India.

Instrument of Accession

Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon proposed an official treaty known as 'instrument of accession' to the princely states. According to the basic tenets of the treaty, the Government of India would control only foreign affairs, defence and communications, leaving all internal issues to be administered by the states.





Nehru and Patel with Mountbatten

More concessions were given by guaranteeing that princes who signed willingly would be retained as constitutional heads of their state, although, they would be 'encouraged' to hand their power over to an elected government. Once the Instrument of Accession was signed, the state would be represented in the Constituent Assembly of India; thereby, becoming an active participant in framing of the new Constitution.

Thus, by employing a potent mix of charm, bullying and cajoling, Mountbatten, Patel and Menon managed to get most of the States to accede. Princely states were engaged through social meetings and unofficial surroundings, lobbying them to forestall potential conflicts and to accede to the Indian Union in good faith before the deadline. Patel invoked the patriotism of India's monarchs, asking them to join in the freedom of their nation and act as responsible rulers who cared about the future of their people, along with issuing an implied threat, that rulers might face popular uprising of their citizens for accession to Indian Union if they did not do so before 15th August 1947.

States

Due to these efforts, from June to August 15th, 1947, 562 of the 565 India-linked states signed the instrument of accession. Before Independence, Travancore was ruled by C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, who wished Travancore to remain as an independent country. The communists of the state revolted against the idea and made an attempt on the ruler's life. Sensing the threat to his life, Iyer resigned. He was succeeded by P.G.N. Unithan. After several rounds of negotiations, the state was acceded to India, in 1949, forming the state of Travancore-Kochi.

At the time of India's Independence, Jodhpur was ruled by a young King Maharaja Hanwant Singh. Exploring other options, he thought that Pakistan would give him a better deal than what India was offering and thus, delayed the accession. He even met Jinnah in Delhi where Jinnah promised him many concessions. Patel met with the King and discussed the future developments like imports of arms, need of grains and linking Jodhpur to Kathiawar by rail, etc. At the same time, Patel warned the King that If he decided to join Pakistan then India would not be able to

help the state during the communal violence, which was prevalent in Punjab and Bengal at the time. Sensing that his best interest lay in joining India, he acceded on 11th August 1947.

In return of signing the Instrument of Accession, the princes were given handsome 'privy purses', the amount was linked to the revenue earned by each state. The Privy Purse was the incentive given to the rulers of the princely states as part of their agreements to integrate with India. However, in the strenuous process of integration, three major conflicts arose that posed a major threat to the Union: Junagadh, Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad.

Junagadh

Junagadh was situated in the Kathiawar region of western India. Though over 70% of its population was Hindu, Junagadh was ruled by a muslim nawab Muhammad Mahabat Khanji III. Also, it did not have a shared land boundary with Pakistan. The Arabian Sea stood between it and Pakistan. Advised by Jinnah, the Nawab delayed the discussion of accession with India and on August 15, 1947 declared its wish of acceding to Pakistan.

Considering the fact that administrative and economic unity of Kathiawar would be endangered due to Junagadh's accession to Pakistan, Indian leaders raised concerns, but both Junagadh and Pakistan did not respond. It was also believed that if Junagadh was permitted to go to Pakistan, it would exacerbate the communal tension already simmering in Gujarat. Thus, India imposed an embargo of essential supplies on the state, including coal, petroleum and sugar.



Later, Pakistan accepted the accession of Junagadh. To resolve the impending issue, India proposed that a referendum or a plebiscite be conducted to decide the

future of the state by the people of the state. These kind of instruments were used before also, in the North West Frontier Province and in the Sylhet district of Assam. But Pakistan refused the idea.

Meanwhile, leaders of the state people's organizations in Kathiawar went on to form a 'provisional government' of Junagadh— an organization that claimed to represent the people of Junagadh and actively worked to overthrow the Nawab's administration. And, by the end of October 1947, it started occupying pockets of Junagadh territory.

Due to this development, the Nawab of Junagadh panicked and fled to Pakistan. As Pakistan was reluctant to send troops to aid Junagadh, the Dewan (now, the in charge after the Nawab fled) asked the Indian government to restore the law and order situation in the state and take over the administration, to which Indian Government complied with alacrity.

This move was strongly protested by Pakistan, which later raised the issue at the United Nations Security Council. Later, in February 1948, the Indian Government conducted a referendum in Junagadh, which overwhelmingly favored merger with Indian Union.

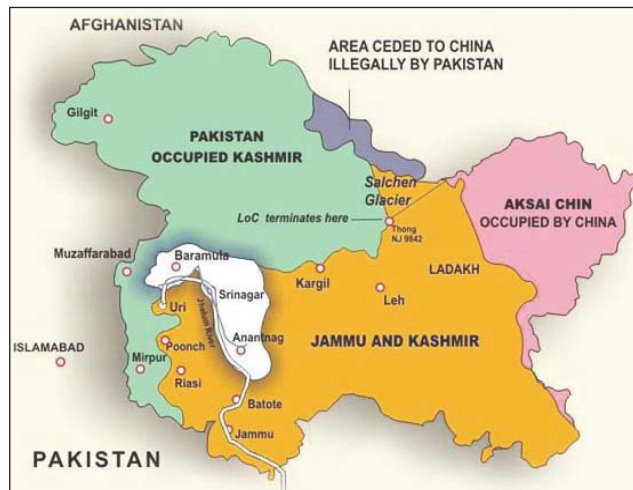
Jammu and Kashmir

In Jammu and Kashmir, the situation was peculiar. It shared border with both Pakistan and India. Here, a hindu king Maharaja Hari Singh ruled over a population that was overwhelmingly muslim. The king was reluctant to join both India and Pakistan. He delayed a decision on accession, hoping to keep Kashmir independent and a neutral state. The popular political forces led by the National Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah, however, wanted to join India.

The leadership in Pakistan organized a tribal 'lashkar' to invade and capture Kashmir, because they feared that Pakistan's security would be threatened if Kashmir went to India. As the army of the state was unable to cope up with this attack, Maharaja Hari Singh sought India's military assistance.

Though, Nehru was against accession without conducting the referendum in the state, India could send its troops to Kashmir only after the state's formal accession to India under international laws, as pointed out by the then Governor General of India, Lord Mountbatten. Thus, the Maharaja acceded to India on 26th October, 1947. In accordance with its democratic principles, India announced that it would conduct referendum on the accession decision once the situation became peaceful. After the accession, Indian leaders immediately took steps to fly troops to Srinagar. Srinagar was first held and then the raiders were gradually driven out of the valley, though,

the invaders occupied some areas of the state and armed conflict continued for a month.



The Indian government approached the United Nation Security Council against the aggression undertaken by Pakistan in Kashmir. However the UNSC converted 'Kashmir question' into 'India-Pakistan dispute'. Following a resolution of the UNSC, both India and Pakistan accepted a ceasefire on 31st December, 1948 which is still prevailing. In 1951, the UN passed a resolution providing for a referendum under UN supervision after Pakistan had withdrawn its troops from the part of Kashmir under its control. The resolution has remained infructuous since Pakistan has refused to withdraw its forces from what is known as Azad Kashmir.

Since then India has regarded Kashmir's accession as final and irrevocable and Kashmir as its integral part. Pakistan continues to deny this claim.

Hyderabad

Similar to Junagadh, in a way, Hyderabad was also ruled by a muslim leader, Nizam Usman Ali Khan, presiding over a population of nearly 16 million, over 80% of them being hindus. But Hyderabad carried much greater importance as it was the largest state at that time, completely surrounded by Indian Territory, located in central India. Thereby, without Hyderabad, there would be a large gap in the center of the Indian Territory, potentially posing a constant threat to India's security in the future. Thus, Hyderabad was essential for India's unity.

After several rounds of negotiations, India signed a "Standstill Agreement", a temporary and year-long agreement, maintaining the status quo.

India signed this temporary agreement, hoping that Nizam would introduce representative government in the state, while the negotiations continued. But, Nizam's intentions were to delay the process and expand his military strength so as to force India to accept his independence or succeed

in acceding to Pakistan owing to tension between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

During the period, there were three important political developments taking place within the state.

1. There was a rapid growth of the militant muslim communal organization, Ittihad-ul-Muslimin and its paramilitary wing, the Razakars, creating violence leading to thousands of people fleeing the state and taking shelter in temporary camps in Indian territory.
2. On 7th August 1947, Hyderabad State Congress launched a powerful satyagraha to force democratization on the Nizam, due to which around 20,000 Satyagrahis were jailed.
3. A powerful communists led peasant struggle had developed in the Telangana region of the state from the

later half of 1946. The movement, which had waned due to the severity of state repression by the end of 1946, recovered its vigour when peasant dalams(squads) organized defence of the people against attacks by the Razakars, attacked big landlords and distributed their lands amongst the peasants and the landless.

The Nizam made no moves towards introducing even a measure of representative government; instead, he kept on delaying the negotiations. At the same time, he kept on importing more and more arms to strengthen his army. Due to these developments, the situation was becoming volatile. To control the situation, Indian Army moved into Hyderabad on 13rd September 1948. The Nizam surrendered within three days and Hyderabad was acceded to Indian Union in November 1948.



Accession of Hyderabad was a symbol of victory of secularism in India as large number of muslims, both in Hyderabad and in the rest of the country, supported the government's policy and actions against the Nizam to the dismay of the leaders of Pakistan and the Nizam.



Operation Polo Hyderabad

Rest of the States

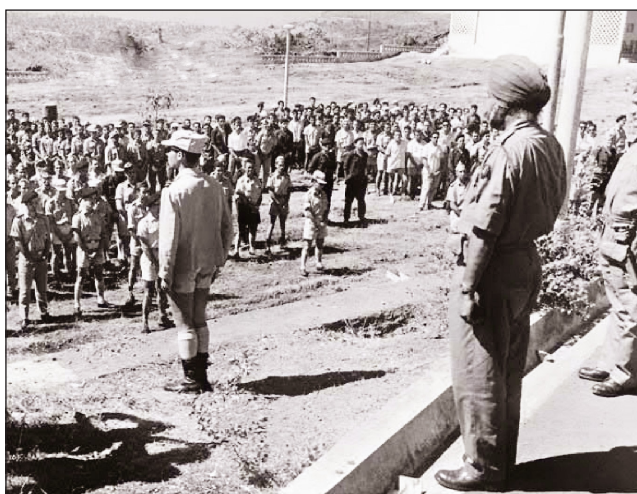
The second and the more difficult stage of the full integration of the princely states into the new Indian nation began in December 1947. Once again Sardar Patel moved with speed, completing the process within one year. Smaller states were either merged with the neighbouring states or merged together to 'form centrally administered areas'.

In return for their surrender of all power and authority, the rulers of major states were given privy purses in perpetuity, free of all taxes. The privy purses amounted to Rs 4.66 crore in 1949 and were later guaranteed by the constitution. The rulers were allowed succession to the gaddi and retained certain privileges such as keeping their titles, flying their personal flags and gun salutes on ceremonial occasions.

Also, there were French and Portuguese owned settlements on India's east and west coasts with Pondicherry and Goa

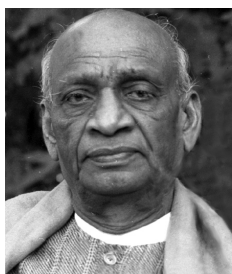
forming their hub. Popular sentiments, in these settlements, were in favor of joining the Indian Union. After a long period of negotiations with French authorities, Pondicherry and other French possessions were handed over to India in 1954.

But Portuguese did not want to handover their territories, especially as Portugal's NATO allies, Britain and the US, were willing to support this defiant attitude. People of Goa started a movement seeking freedom from the Portuguese but were brutally suppressed. After a long period of patience, the Indian Army was ordered to liberate Goa on 17th December 1961. The Governor-General of Goa surrendered without a fight. Thus, in a span of fourteen years, political integration of India was completed.



Operation Vijay, Goa

Role of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel



Sardar Patel effectively handled the integration of the princely states with his diplomatic skills and foresightedness. The problem of amalgamating 565 independent states within a democratic self-governing India was difficult and delicate. But it was essential to save India from balkanization, once

the Paramountcy of British crown had lapsed. He played a decisive role in integrating the princely states in the following way:

- Sardar Patel was the Minister for Home and States Affairs, and was given the explicit responsibility of welding a united and strategically secure India in time for the transfer of power.
- Sardar Patel, along with V.P. Menon, was instrumental in formulating the Instrument of Accession, a balanced treaty to ensure the integration of princely states with Indian Union.

- Patel followed an Iron-handed policy, giving primacy to the unity of India.
- Due to Patel's reputation for firmness and even ruthlessness sometimes, most of the princes responded to his appeal to accede to India by 15 August 1947.
- At several instances, he used both persuasion and pressure as well as invoked the patriotism of the monarchs.
- Patel, also, worked towards addressing the concerns of monarchs with respect to their relationship after acceding to India, thus, accelerating the integration process.
- He carried out the task of integrating Junagadh as a skilled statesman, without which, Junagadh would have been a part of Pakistan today. He also subdued the Nizam of Hyderabad tactfully.

Clearly, due to Sardar Patel's masterful diplomacy and pragmatism, the process of integration of the princely states was completed without causing any civil war and, thus, balkanization of the country was successfully avoided.

Partition and its Aftermath

Partition

To prolong their rule in India, the British had followed a divide-and-rule policy. They based their knowledge of the peoples of India on the basic religious texts and the intrinsic differences they found in them, instead of on the way they coexisted in the present. They also feared a potential threat from the muslims who ruled India for over 300 years under the Mughal Empire.

By the end of the 19th century, there were many nationalistic movements going on in the country. At one hand, the Indian National Congress was calling for Britain to quit India, on the other hand Muslim League, in 1940, passed a resolution for them to 'Divide and Quit'. There were several reasons for the birth of a separate muslim homeland in the subcontinent, and all three parties-the British, the Congress and the Muslim League were responsible.

After the Second World War, Britain simply no longer had the resources with which to control its greatest imperial asset, and its exit from India was messy, hasty, and clumsily improvised.

The break-up of Britain's Indian empire involved the movement of some 12 million people, uprooted, ordered out, or fleeing their homes and seeking safety. The violence polarised communities on the subcontinent as never before.

Partition led to creation of two sovereign countries, Pakistan on 14th August 1947 and India on 15th August 1947. This led to the division of the Bengal province of British India into East Bengal of Pakistan (later Bangladesh) and West Bengal of India. Similarly, Punjab region of British India

was divided into the Punjab province of West Pakistan and the Punjab state of India. At the same time, the event led to division of the defence force, the civil services, the treasury and other assets.



India before and after 1947

Aftermath

The partition had repercussions on every sphere-social, economic and political.

Social Impact

- The immediate result of partition was violence. Communal riots took place throughout the country destroying lives, wealth and resulting in bitterness between the two communities. In Punjab and Bengal—provinces, abutting India's borders with West and East Pakistan, respectively—the carnage was especially intense, with massacres, arson, forced conversions, mass abductions, and savage sexual violence.
- Moreover, after India attained independence, the minorities were affected directly in the areas of partition.
- Their fate was in a perilous situation; in addition to this, the 'direct action' campaign by the Muslim league was followed by the Calcutta killing and disturbances in the Naokhali district of East Bengal.

Political Impact

- The partition reported to have displaced about 12 million to 15 million people in the former British Indian Empire.
- The partition also meant division of territories. For this purpose, Cyril Radcliffe, the British civil servant was handed the daunting job of working out the border on the map.
- The line in question is the international boundary between India and Pakistan which was hurriedly drawn up in the summer of 1947, almost immediately prior to independence and partition that year.
- In their rush to achieve their own political goals, Britishers decided not to complete territorial partition before final political separation.
- This decision left Indian and Pakistani citizens in the peculiar predicament of not knowing which country they were in, on August 15th or 16th.
- Additionally, Mountbatten's delay in announcing the Radcliffe Line meant, effectively, that India and

Pakistan had no boundaries for the first two days of their existence.

- This heightened the level of violence and many perished, who could have otherwise been saved.
- The biggest effect is definitely, the Kashmir issue.
- India was able to solve its tussles with the states of Junagadh and Hyderabad, but Kashmir was tricky as it lay on the border. The issue is still unresolved today and has become a major propaganda instrument for terrorist organisations in Pakistan and India.

Economic Impact

- With the partition, 77% of the territory and nearly 82% of the population of undivided India was left with India. The rest went to Pakistan.
- Partition affected India's economy, also. Some of the important industries; namely the jute and cotton were adversely affected.
- Due to partition, important raw jute and cotton growing areas went to East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh), while the mills were located in India.
- Shortage of raw material was also experienced by the paper, leather tanning and some chemical industries in wake of partition.
- Partition also resulted in loss of market by creating a gap in demand for products like cotton textile, glass, Aluminium, vegetable oils, rubber, goods, foot wears etc., which used to come from areas that went to Pakistan.
- Partition resulted in dislocation of transport and communication facilities in the country.
- The railway network of undivided India was also disrupted by partition, Indian union obtaining 24,565 miles and Pakistan 6,748 miles.
- Immediately after partition, there was an atmosphere of uncertainty and suspense. This seemed to have shaken the confidence of private enterprises in the country affecting the level of investment adversely.

Linguistic Reorganization of States

The principle of linguistic provinces had no precedent in the history of India. The boundaries of the states changed in accordance with the changing strength and abilities of the kings. British conquest of India continued for nearly hundred years but they also did not pay any attention towards proper reorganization of the territory based on languages. Thus, most of the provinces were multilingual and multicultural.

Arguments in favour of reorganization of states on linguistic basis:

- (a) Day-to-day administrative works become easier, if done in one language.

- (b) In India, language is closely related to culture and customs.

- (c) Democracy holds real meaning to the common people when politics and administration are conducted through the language they understand.

It is for this reason that, with the involvement of the masses in the national movement after 1919, Congress undertook political mobilization in the mother tongue and, in 1921, amended its constitution and reorganized its regional branches on linguistic basis. Since then, Congress repeatedly committed itself to the redrawing of the provincial boundaries on linguistic lines.

The division of India during the British period into British provinces and Indian States was itself fortuitous. At the time of independence in 1947, India consisted of 565 disjointed princely states that were merged together to form 27 states. The grouping of states at the time was done on the basis of political and historical considerations rather than on linguistic or cultural divisions, but that was a temporary arrangement.

Reasons to Delay the Reorganisation Process

- Partition had created serious administrative, economic and political dislocation.
- Independence, coming immediately after the Second World War, was accompanied by serious economic and law and order problems.
- There was Kashmir issue and a war like situation with Pakistan, along with the communal situation in India, in aftermath of the Partition.
- The government felt that the most important task for the present was to consolidate national unity.
- Any effort undertaken immediately to redraw the internal boundaries might dislocate administration and economic development, intensify regional and linguistic rivalries, unleash destructive forces, and damage the unity of the country.

JVP Committee



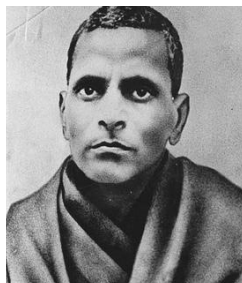
The Linguistic Provinces Commission, chaired by Justice S.K. Dhar, was appointed in 1948. The commission did not favor reorganization of states based on linguistic criteria

as it could threaten national unity. But there was a constant demand and protest, especially in South India for the linguistic reorganization. Thus, in December 1948, the JVP Committee comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya was formed to study the issue. The Committee, in its report submitted in April 1949, rejected the idea of reorganization of states on a linguistic basis for the time being, emphasizing on unity, national security and economic development as the need of the hour.

Potti Sriramalu Incident

Madras Presidency had many different languages. There was a strong case for formation of Andhra Pradesh out of Madras Presidency but the sides were divided on the question as to which state should take the Madras city. This prolonged the issue.

In October 1952, a veteran Congressman named Potti Sriramulu went on a fast demanding the immediate constitution of Andhra State. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalachari, and the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru ignored him. But Sriramulu was undeterred.



Potti Sriramulu

He undertook hunger strike and died during the night of 15/16 December after 56 days without food. His martyrdom provoked widespread public anger, with hartals and dharnas held across the Telugu speaking areas, and demonstrators attacking and burning government offices and railway stations. The government immediately gave in and conceded the demand for a separate state of Andhra, which finally came into existence in October 1953. Simultaneously, Tamil Nadu was created as a Tamil speaking state.

“Sons of the Soil” Doctrine

“Sons of the soil doctrine” has led to regionalism since 1950s. It dwells on the view that a state, with its resources, mainly belongs to the main linguistic group of the state, called ‘sons of the soil’ or the ‘local’ residents. All the others, even if they have lived there for a long time but is their mother tongue is not the state’s main language, were to be treated as ‘outsiders’. The ‘locals’ portrayed their group as indigenous, and as rightfully possessing the area as their group’s ancestral home. Thus, language loyalty and regionalism was used to systematically exclude the ‘outsiders’ from the economic life of a state or city.

Reasons behind this Doctrine

- The economy’s failure to create enough employment opportunities for the recently educated created an acute scarcity of jobs, and led to intense competition for the available jobs during the 1960s and 1970s.

- These movements have mainly arisen, and have been more virulent, when there is actual or potential competition for industrial and middle-class jobs, between the migrants and the local educated middle-class youth.
- The movement has been more intense in states and cities where ‘outsiders’ had greater access to higher education and occupied more middle-class positions in government service, professions and industry and were engaged in small businesses, such as small-scale industry and shop keeping.

The issue was more intensified in those cities where the speakers of the state language were in a minority or had a bare majority, for example in Bombay in 1961, the Marathi speakers constituted 42.8 per cent of the population. In Bangalore, the Kannada speakers were less than 25 per cent.

Also, majority of middle-class job opportunities, after 1952, were in government service and the public sector enterprises. Thus, many politicians mobilized the people on this ground to put pressure on the government. They took advantage of the ‘sons of the soil’ sentiment for gaining political power. They claimed that the ‘local’ people in the states concerned are socially, economically and educationally backward and are not able to compete with the more advanced migrant communities; thus, they should be provided with reservation. Reservations on grounds of residence have also been approved by the courts.

States Reorganization Act (1956)

After the creation of Andhra, other linguistic communities also demanded their own separate states.

Thus, to deal with the problem holistically, the government formed the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC), with Justice Fazl Ali, K.M. Panikkar and Hridaynath Kunzru as members, to examine ‘objectively and dispassionately’ the entire question of the reorganization of the states of the Union in August 1953. The commission submitted its report after two years, in 1955. The commission recognized the linguistic principle for redrawing of the state boundaries, though it emphasized giving due importance to administrative and economic factors. The government accepted the commission’s recommendations, though with certain modifications, and quickly implemented them.



The States Reorganization Act was passed by the parliament in November 1956. It provided for fourteen states and six centrally administered territories. Under this new amendment, the existing distinction amongst Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D states were done away with and they came to be known as the “states”, while the Part C and Part D states were replaced by a new entity of “Union Territory”.

As a result of the Act, the Telangana area of Hyderabad state was transferred to Andhra; Kerala was created by merging the Malabar district of the old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin. Certain Kannada-speaking areas of the states of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg were added to the Mysore state. Bombay state was enlarged by merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi speaking areas of Hyderabad with it.

Issue of Maharastra and Gujarat

The commission had opposed dividing Bombay and Punjab. There were widespread protests and violence in the Bombay city for splitting the state. Under pressure, the government divided the Bombay state into two linguistic states Maharashtra and Gujarat, and making Bombay city a centrally administered state. Again, there were protests by the Maharashtrians against this move and they demanded Bombay city be included in the Maharashtra state. The Gujaratis opposed the demands of the Maharashtrians as they felt that they would be a minority in the new state. This led to large scale violence which spread to Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat. The government finally agreed in May 1960 to bifurcate the state of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat, with Bombay city being included in Maharashtra, and Ahmedabad being made the capital of Gujarat.

Issue of Punjab

Similar situation existed in Punjab, also. Punjab was a trilingual state, having three language speakers Punjabi, Hindi and Pahari. Punjabi speaking people started a demand for a Punjabi Suba (Punjabi speaking state), but the demand soon got mixed up with communal overtones. The Akalis launched a non-violent agitation for a Punjabi Suba. Political parties used the issue to promote communal politics. The Hindu communalists were against creating the separate state.

The States Reorganisation Commission maintained that Punjabi was not sufficiently distinct from Hindi and the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state is a disguise for a religion based Sikh state. This was seen as a discrimination against the Sikh minority as all other 14 languages in the Constitution were granted statehood.

After a struggle lasting for more than a decade, in 1966, the Sikhs were granted a state. Punjab was divided into Punjabi-speaking (and Sikh-dominated) Punjab and Hindi-speaking (and Hindu-majority) Haryana. In addition,

six of Punjab's mountainous regions were transferred to Himachal Pradesh.

Thus, after more than a decade of continuous struggle, the reorganization of states based on linguistic criteria was largely over. By doing so, the aspirations of people were satisfied and the platform was set for national integration. Also, the fear that the linguistic reorganization of states would weaken the federal structure, has been unfounded. On the other hand, with the rationalization of the political map of the nation, the nation stands to benefit as the states have become more functional and coherent units in the overall Indian Union.

Question [2016]

Has the formation of linguistic states strengthened the cause of India's unity?

Integration of Tribals in India

Tribals spread all over the country and had their own distinct culture, languages and ways of life. They mainly resided in hilly and forested areas, in relative isolation as compared to non-tribal neighbors. They constituted about 6.9 percent of population. Except in the Northeast, they constitute minorities in their other home states.



During colonialism, the relative isolation of tribals was eroded to some extent. This led to their exploitation as they were reduced to agricultural laborers and their relations with forests were also destroyed. The tribals depended on forests for food, fuel and cattle feed and for raw material for their handicrafts. Thus, they were driven to abject poverty and indebtedness. Loss of land, indebtedness, exploitation by middlemen, denial of access to forests and forest products, and oppression and extortion by policemen, forest officials, and other government officials was to lead to a series of tribal uprisings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—for example, the Santhal uprising and the Munda rebellion led by Birsa Munda.

Difficulties in Tribal Integration

- Their primitive way of life.
- Economic and social backwardness.
- Low level of literacy.

- Hackneyed system of production.
- Absence of value system.
- Sparse physical infrastructure in backward tribal areas.
- Demographic quality of tribal areas.

The above mentioned problems made it imperative for a systematic process of development of tribes and tribal areas.

Theories of Integration

The Indian tribal society is a unique society with diversity of nature and people. In our country, known for the extreme poverty of the masses, the tribes constitute the core of the poor. They also have distinct culture and way of life which is closely associated to forests and nature and, hence, a balance was needed which would ensure that they get their rightful share of country's development while protecting their rights and preserving their unique culture. Thus, integration of tribals represented an extremely complex problem.

Isolation Theory

Also, one way of dealing the tribal issue was of keeping them segregated i.e. leaving the tribal people alone, ensuring their cultural linkages remain undisturbed from the mainstream society's culture which was foreign to them. It would preserve their way of life but this meant that their society would continue to face many problems which could otherwise, be resolved with modern developments in areas like health and education among others.

Assimilation Theory

At the same time, quick assimilation of tribal people with the Indian society would definitely lead to their development vis-a-vis the non-tribals. But this would destroy their social and cultural identity and many other virtues they possess. In fact, this would ultimately lead to possession of tribal lands by the outsiders which would further push them in perpetual poverty.

Critical Analysis

Thus, both approaches given above, isolation and assimilation of tribal people, were rejected. Instead Nehru advocated progressive integration of tribal people into the Indian society while preserving their distinct identity and culture. This approach was based on the basic understanding that "the tribal areas have to progress and they have to progress in their own way and at their own pace". In essence, the tribals would themselves decide the changes they need and also these changes would be adopted by them gradually. Thus, the problem now was how to combine these two seemingly contradictory approaches.

Tribal Panchsheel (Nehruvian Approach)

The solution was the delicate balance of the two approaches. Nehru advocated for social and economic development of the tribals, which in turn, would empower them in the long run, and their gradual integration with the Indian society. For this, five fundamental principles were laid down for tribal development:

