

## FROM VERNACULAR TO SPECTACULAR POLITICS: TECTONIC SHIFT IN REORGANIZATION OF STATES

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### **Abstract**

On the eve of platinum jubilee anniversary of the State Reorganization Act of 1956, this effort is meant to understand and appreciate the genesis of provinces in British India and their reorganization by means of territorial rearrangement among states on the basis of subnational identity politics vis-à-vis dominant language in regions across the board. Initially situated on the basis of sovereign rule, followed by colonization and consequent inclusion to the British India, the maiden realignment of large states by the Act of 1956 was provided for on the basis of regional language. Subsequently, the language formula got supplemented and gradually got supplanted by myriad other variants of subnational identity politics to indulge in another slow-yet-steady surge of otherwise wise expectation for regional development by means of more autonomy for regional population to this end. While the altitude politics played behind the formation of hill states, ethnic politics played behind the formation of forest states. Few are formed by means of the regional differences. Several other regions received statehood with sui generis reasoning behind and respective qualifiers applicable to them. Taken such regional traits together, a tentative trajectory about the tectonic shift toward mushrooming of micro-level states for minute reasoning behind looms larger. This forthcoming effort is intended to unfold tentative prospects and consequences of the given reorganization roadmap in time ahead.

**Keywords:** federalist, quasi-federalist, con-federalist, counter-federalist, etc.

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*‘What holds India, a vast multi-ethnic country, together in the midst of so many odds? The question is particularly significant because India’s unity and integrity has been possible despite democracy. The key to the above success lies in a mode of federation building that sought to continuously ‘right-size’ the territory of India. The method followed in doing so is called ‘states reorganization’ in India.’*

- Harihar Bhattacharyya.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

The humanmade territorial jurisdiction stands subjected to realignment; for the peoples and for the communities alike. Therefore, both international and intranational borderlines remain subjected to realignment as and whenever circumstances may and do arise. Thus, intranational borderlines within the territory of Indian Republic dividing all its provinces (read the states) underwent tectonic shift for several times way back since the States Reorganization Act, 1956. More than specific cases of shift in its intranational borderlines, the forthcoming paragraphs but place research foci upon reasoning and realpolitik behind shift of intranational borderlines; something subjected to a tectonic shift through these seven decades (1956-2025) of its voyage: from the linguistic politics in welfare state before liberalization-privatization-globalization to the development politics in laissez-faire state after liberalization-privatization-globalization (read political culture to political economy).

The mapping of territorial jurisdiction of provinces across the South-Asian subcontinent took place to the credit of sovereign coverage by the political leadership since time immemorial. In the British India, the colonial regime was by and large adhered to the provincial jurisdiction and maintained *status quo* until the same caused inconvenience to governance. For instance, proposed partition of the Bengal Presidency

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<sup>1</sup> Harihar Bhattacharyya, States Reorganization and Accommodation of Ethno-Territorial Cleavages in India, Occasional Paper Series, No. 29, Forum of Federations, Ottawa, 2019  
[https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/India\\_29.pdf](https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/India_29.pdf)

(from notification in 1905 to revocation in 1911) may be cited;<sup>2</sup> something charged with divisive politics to foment communal conflict in Bengal. For the first time in civilizational chronicles of the South-Asian subcontinent, an intranational borderline was thereby drawn, not on the basis of cartography but, on the basis of demography; something finally drawn by the partition of India to split British India into Bharat and Pakistan in 1947 and, once again, split Pakistan with the formation of Bangladesh as a sovereign country in 1971. Interestingly, indeed, while India was split in 1947 on the basis of religion, Pakistan was split in 1971 on the basis of language; something relevant in course of state reorganization discourse. Since independence, ideation of states' reorganization by means of regional language was prevalent; something documented by official records in clear and unambiguous language:<sup>3</sup>

*“The demand for the reorganisation of States is often equated with the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces. This is: because the movement for redistribution of British Indian provinces was, in a large measure, a direct outcome of the phenomenal development of regional languages in the nineteenth century which led to an emotional integration of different language groups and the development amongst them of a consciousness of being distinct cultural units. When progressive public opinion in India, therefore, crystallised in favour of rationalisation of administrative units, the objective was conceived and sought in terms of linguistically homogeneous units.”*

*“Recent years have, however, seen some shift in emphasis on the linguistic principle and a growing realisation of the need to balance it with other factors relevant to the reshaping of the political geography of India, such as national unity and administrative, economic and other considerations.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Vide Primary Sources: The partition of Bengal  
<https://www.history21.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Global-1905-5.2-Primary-Sources-The-partition-of-bengal.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Report of the States Reorganization Commission, 1955, Chapter 2: Rationale of Reorganization, Paragraph 44-45  
[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/State%20Reorganisation%20Commisison%20Report%20of%201955\\_270614.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/State%20Reorganisation%20Commisison%20Report%20of%201955_270614.pdf)

After its partition, by means of the States Reorganization Act of 1956, India followed the colonial legacy by realignment of intranational borderlines with dominant regional language as a demographic qualifier. Indeed, primary reasoning behind the states' reorganization regime was administrative convenience for good governance of a subcontinent-like country like India. Since then, usage of such a demographic qualifier has but turned somewhat counterproductive with consecutive usage of myriad other demographic qualifiers by subnational identity politics in time ahead; followed by consequent realignment of intranational borderlines time and again.

Even a cursory glance upon the chronicles of states' reorganization in last seven decades (1956-2025) leaves a little doubt about the metamorphosis of reasoning behind reorganization of states in the Nehruvian decade and in relatively recent decades respectively. While the states underwent initial realignment on the basis of language as a qualifier, like the reorganization of State of Bombay in 1960, reasoning behind states' realignment subsequently shifted the goalpost to several other demographic qualifiers; with or even without dominant language as a qualifier.

1963: Nagaland.<sup>4</sup>

1966: Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.<sup>5</sup>

1972: Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya.<sup>6</sup>

1975: Sikkim.<sup>7</sup>

1987: Arunachal Pradesh<sup>8</sup> and Goa.<sup>9</sup>

2000: Chhattisgarh,<sup>10</sup> Jharkhand<sup>11</sup> and Uttarakhand.<sup>12</sup>

2014: Telengana.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The State of Nagaland Act, 1962.

<sup>5</sup> The Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966.

<sup>6</sup> The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> The Government of Sikkim Act, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> The Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> The Goa, Daman and Diu Reorganization Act, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> The Madhya Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> The Bihar Reorganization Act, 2000.

2019: Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>14</sup>

None of these states stated above underwent reorganization with the linguistic reasoning alone; if at all. Besides, by courtesy, the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act of 1991, National Capital Territory of Delhi received *sui generis* status, somewhere between statehood and other Union Territories in India; without resort to language as qualifier for reorganization.

## II. Reasoning behind Classical Reorganization of States in India

The author hereby advances an argument that, at the best, language may have been latent intent of the legislature since, incidental reference of the linguistic minorities apart,<sup>15</sup> language was not provided for in the statute as an official qualifier for the states' reorganization regime. Nor language has received mention on the count of states' reorganization in the Constitution.<sup>16</sup>

*“Parliament may by law—*

*(a) form a new State by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States or parts of States or by uniting any territory to a part of any State;*

*(b) increase the area of any State;*

*(c) diminish the area of any State;*

*(d) alter the boundaries of any State;*

*(e) alter the name of any State.”*

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<sup>12</sup> The Uttar Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> The Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> *Vide* section 21.2(b) of the States Reorganization Act, 1956  
<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1680/1/a1956-37.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> The Constitution of India, 1949; Article 3.

Neither language plays the primary objective for reorganization of the Union Territories. After the State of Bombay got split into Gujarat and Maharashtra, primarily on language count (unwritten in the statute, though),<sup>17</sup> no state has ever got reorganized on language count alone.<sup>18</sup> Thus, claim for monopoly of language as exclusive qualifier to get the states reorganized suffers setback by default. Language, however, may have played as one among other qualifiers in several occasions while the same got never played out as exclusive reasoning behind states' reorganization afterwards.

The author explored another explanation to bridge discursive gap between fact and fiction. In the then South-Asian lifeworld, political culture used to reflect the regional identity politics and, in pluricultural setting of the then subcontinent, language emerged as icon for the region. Consequently, local language used to reflect default political culture of the region; something pregnant with the potential of statehood in the political map of a cosmopolitan country like India as assertion of sub-nationalism. Rather than the language by means of its own merit, therefore, local language played signifier to reflect default cult of the local as signified; somewhat similar to totem of the local; thereby showcase subnational identity politics of the region to the world. A somewhat similar national identity politics is played out by nation-states likewise while their statesmen address their counterparts in their respective national vernacular to showcase the same as cult of the local in course of global governance discourse while only a few, too few, languages are recognized by the UN administrative regime as official languages and working languages.<sup>19</sup> In a pluricultural setting of the then India, therefore, more than local language by its own merit, the same resembled iconic cult of the local; something different from others and, also, difficult for others to cope with due to typical local peculiarity of its own.

This treatise falls short in the absence of mention about historicity behind policy choice of the language as default icon of subnational identity politics in the

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<sup>17</sup> The Bombay Reorganization Act, 1960.

<sup>18</sup> First Schedule to the Constitution of India, 1949.

South-Asian subcontinent. The subnational population of India initially followed the colonizers while getting themselves identified by respective vernacular; the way England is meant for the Englishmen, France meant for the Frenchmen, Ireland meant for the Irishmen, etc. Likewise, subnational identity politics initiated its tryst with similar legacy; the way Kashmir meant for Kashmiris, Maharashtra meant for the Marathas, Tamil Nadu meant for Tamils, etc. Thus, language reigned the reorganization to prevent a pandemonium wreak havoc on diversified regional demographic identity by default.

### III. Realpolitik behind Contemporary Reorganization of States

The classicist reorganization jurisprudence did not last long. After the Nehruvian decade, federalist chronicles in India witnessed a slow-yet-steady shift in states' reorganization regime from linguistic politics to developmental politics. In preceding paragraphs, linguistic politics is deciphered as dispositive vis-à-vis local political culture. Likewise, in following paragraphs, developmental politics is deciphered as dispositive vis-à-vis local political economy. The author hereby explores explanations to understand and appreciate the realpolitik behind paradigm shift in policy choice. Also, the author engages his enquiry beyond language and development, e.g., cultural traits, ethnic conflicts, regional autonomies, resource accessibilities, *sui generis* issues, etc., other dominant qualifiers for the reorganization. Last yet not least, his effort is on toward theorization of reorganization to get permutation and combination of the statehood characterized; the way reorganization initiated with vernacular yet turned spectacular with collage or montage of tributaries toward states' deconstruction or reconstruction or both within the federalist polity.

1963: Nagaland. Cultural and ethnic identity politics

1966: Himachal Pradesh. Geographic distinctiveness

Haryana. Linguistic and regional differences

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<sup>19</sup> Paragraph 2(1) of the UN General Assembly Rules of Procedure concerning Languages, adopted in 1946; read with amendments no. 3189 and 3190 to include the Chinese as another working

- 1972: Manipur. Mass movement for more autonomy
- Tripura. Recalibration of international border
- Meghalaya. Linguistic and ethnic identity politics
- 1975: Sikkim. Annexation with the Republic of India
- 1987: Goa. Linguistic and regional politics
- Arunachal Pradesh. Cultural and ethnic politics
- 2000: Chhattisgarh. Cultural and developmental politics
- Jharkhand. Ethnic and developmental politics
- Uttarakhand. Mass movement for statehood
- 2014: Telengana. Mass movement for statehood
- 2019: Jammu and Kashmir. Administrative arrangement

The inventory cited above validates the hypothesis in favour of a tectonic shift in states' reorganization from the vernacular to the spectacular. Thus, a partial contribution of linguistic politics toward statehood in sporadic cases apart, e.g., cases of Haryana, Meghalaya and Goa, in 1966, 1972 and 1987 respectively, the vernacular has hardly had contribution for statehood in relatively recent times. Thus, tectonic shift from political culture to political economy apart, there is space for more fundamental theorization by means of human rights realpolitik in India.

Since adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by India in 1948, followed by the Constitution of India in 1949, Directive Principles of State Policy in particular, so-called second-generation rights (read socio-economic and cultural rights) appealed more to the peoples of the Global South; including those of the South-Asian subcontinent. Thus, compared to civil and political rights, states' reorganization regime placed more emphasis upon cultural rights and the vernacular resembles icon of cultural rights. With the passage of time, third-generation rights were on the rise and,

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language and the Arabic as another official language respectively, in 1973.



consequently, a collective right to development of the community initially supplemented and gradually sidelined cultural rights. Consequently, linguistic politics got eclipsed, if not erased, by developmental politics since the former fell short to fix famine, followed by hunger, starvation and malnutrition; something more fundamental to impoverished population across the Global South, compared to surreal appeal of free speech in the vernacular. Not without reason that so-called green revolution movement received proactive state patronage from the Republic. The developing state was duty-bound to feed population in millions despite consecutive crop failure out of irregular monsoon, followed by more regular farmers' suicides.

Since the gradual accession of India to liberalization-privatization-globalization in 1990s, developmental politics witnessed acceleration with the passage of time; more so 2000s onward. Not without reason that the same turned apparent in course of mass movement for the statehood in states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand in 2000 and in Telengana in 2014 respectively. There was no linguistic reasoning since both sides of the split states shared the same vernacular:

2000-2024. Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

2000-2024. Jharkhand and Bihar

2000-2024. Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh

2014-2024. Telengana and Andhra Pradesh

At the anniversary year of first quarter-century since 2000, the performance of all three- taken together appears spectacular. Similar is the case of Telengana after the new state completes its first decade. Despite Gujarat and Maharashtra got partitioned primarily by linguistic politics, both performed spectacular since they transcended the vernacular after mutual partition is over. Thick of the soup, vernacular politics is getting gradually supplanted by developmental politics. Besides subnational identity politics at the fore, therefore, subnational developmental politics follows movement for statehood

without failure; fortified by a constitutional directive behind.<sup>20</sup> Individual and group equity apart, social justice extends its coverage to include regional equity; something *sine qua non* for good governance and, in the absence of the same, ought to attract public attention, followed by agitation, for separation by means of statehood within the Republic. Incumbents are too many to prompt the author not to flatter or foment by mention of the same.

In recent times, in a bizarre case, special status for the State of Jammu and Kashmir was withdrawn; followed by the creation of two separate Union Territories: (i) Jammu and Kashmir, and (ii) Ladakh; by means of an Act of Parliament.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, these two constituent territories have had local languages of their own, e.g., Kashmiri and Ladakhi respectively, the primary basis of reorganization was spectacular, more than vernacular; with administrative realpolitik behind.

#### IV. Reorganization of States: Ramblings with Ramifications

Either by reasoning or realpolitik behind, reorganization of the states has had ramblings with ramifications; both generic and specific in its characteristics. A generic trend behind such reorganization often than not culminates into the split of territorial jurisdiction of a large state into two. Consequently, number of states follows a slow-yet-steady rise with ramifications upon federal features of the Republic. Albeit, by means of *sui generis* means and methods of its own, USA witnessed a similar slow-yet-steady rise in the number of its states. While the Constitution of USA was adopted with the ratification of ninth State, New Hampshire, on June 21 of 1788, followed by ratification by four other States, number count but reached fifty with the

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<sup>20</sup> “The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.”  
The Constitution of India, 1949; Article 38(2).

<sup>21</sup> *Supra*, n. 14.

admission of Hawaii to USA on August 21 of 1959.<sup>22</sup> India has witnessed a relatively rapid rise in number of its States: from fourteen in 1956 to twenty-eight in 2019 respectively.<sup>23</sup> In most of these cases, in USA and in India alike, benefits outsmart burdens of reorganization into the smaller states.

So far as aftermath of the reorganization on federalist politics is concerned, with regional international reasoning and realpolitik of their own, issues and challenges in USA and in India often than not turn out more opposite than apposite. By and large surrounded by natural fences, deserts in the south, oceans in the east and the west, waterbodies and watercourses in the north, respectively, federal politics in USA remains insulated from international relations and politics. On the contrary, surrounded by few unfriendly foreign states by means of international relations and politics, central and coastal states apart, federal politics in India, including reorganization, often than not remains somewhat hyperlinked to regional international relations and geopolitics; not without reason that USA prefers political federalism while India is by and large adhered to administrative federalism with central omnipresence in the state of affairs of the affairs of state. Thus, central and coastal states apart, states' reorganization has had far-reaching consequences upon the unity and integrity of the Nation;<sup>24</sup> something nonnegotiable to the life of the Republic. For instance, while Union Territories received statehood earlier, State of Jammu and Kashmir is but divided into two Union Territories; (i) Jammu and Kashmir and (ii) Ladakh, respectively.

With the number of states on its rise, regional political parties, taken together, gradually grow and gain the bargain power to engage a dialogic space with larger political parties; in the Union and in their respective states alike; thereby play critical qualifiers in course of governance discourse. The presence of regional politics in power plays a tributary to productive ecosystem; thereby prevents the preponderance of larger

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<sup>22</sup> NCC Staff, The day the Constitution (of USA) was ratified, posted June 21, 2024 <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-day-the-constitution-was-ratified#:~:text=On%20June%2021%2C%201788%2C%20the,a%20long%20and%20arduous%20process.>

<sup>23</sup> State Reorganization in India: Unity, Diversity and Ongoing Challenges, ONLYIAS, July 26, 2024 <https://pwnonlyias.com/ncert-notes/india-state-reorganization-history/#:~:text=States%20Reorganization%20Act%201956%3A%20Enacted,%2C%20and%20Part%2DC%20states.>

<sup>24</sup> *Vide* Preamble to the Constitution of India, 1949.

parties across the board; something detrimental of good governance. The primacy of regionalist politics alone in power but plays a tributary to counterproductive ecosystem; thereby prevent the performance of larger parties assuring the unity and integrity of the Nation. While local voices ought to be heard by the Union in course of federalist discourse, myriad competing, often than not conflicting, parochial voices in statal institutions of otherwise wise democratic governance may culminate into cacophony, rather than caucus; thereby indulge in a free-for-all to gross detriment of the good governance.

In recent times, therefore, effort is on to get the hitherto course of states' reorganization discourse institutionalized; "*with powers to provide for the establishment of a States and Union Territories Reorganisation Commission to recommend the reorganisation of States and Union territories to the Central Government through periodic review of demands of new States or Union territories,*"<sup>25</sup> on the basis of one or more of the statutory grounds for reorganization:<sup>26</sup>

*The Commission shall, while recommending on the reorganisation of States and Union territories under sub-section (1), take into consideration the following—*

- (i) *administrative efficacy;*
- (ii) *national unity and security;*
- (iii) *economic interests;*
- (iv) *geographical position;*
- (v) *population;*
- (vi) *aspirations of the people;*
- (vii) *cultural homogeneity;*

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<sup>25</sup> Preamble to the States and Union Territories Reorganization Bill, 2019, as introduced in Lok Sabha by Dr. Shashi Tharoor  
<https://sansad.in/getFile/BillsTexts/LSBillTexts/Asintroduced/773LS%20As%20Int....pdf?source=legislation>

<sup>26</sup> *Id*, section 5(2).

(viii) *financial cost of reorganisation; and*

(ix) *any other factors as may be prescribed*

While the draft legislation of 2019 is compared to the report of the States Reorganization Commission in 1953,<sup>27</sup> regional language has lost relevance as a core ground of reorganization; though, may be read in between the lines, e.g., aspirations of the people, cultural homogeneity, etc. Thus, states' reorganization, reasoning and realpolitik alike, has witnessed a metamorphosis, signified by elevation of several other grounds, e.g., administrative efficiency, national unity and security, etc., to the core as priority agenda for states' reorganization with the passage of time.

The regional electoral politics often than not plays underneath to foment mass movement for states' reorganization since the consequent birth of smaller states proceeds for proliferation of political and administrative opportunities for regional political players; followed by political career prospect for outfits in government and in opposition with newer statehood to the credit of the region and its population; by means of the consequent birth of legislature, executive, judiciary, public service, healthcare institution, higher education institution, etc., for newborn states. In seven decades (1956-2025), number of the states in India turns doubled, proportionate to USA. However, formation of newer states in India is fueled by *sui generis* regional reasoning. While classical reasoning emerged from spiritual tryst of the regional population, material thirst of the regional pressure politics sometimes reigns contemporary reasoning for reorganization:<sup>28</sup>

*“The demand for the creation of new states in India have gained a new impetus with Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh and a proposal by Uttar Pradesh government to divide the state to create smaller states. The demand for*

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<sup>27</sup> *Supra*, n. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Anuradha Rai, *State Reorganization in India: Real-politicking or Electoral Politics*, The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. LXXIII, No. 4, October-December, 2012, p. 665  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41858874.pdf?casa\\_token=IUeKFcnJWywAAAAA:h8b2\\_wsubIvmZqvWVZQzJCgdhzkRBGOYdR\\_5jItW6LvfpWqYx8fAnXNTEEJwf83U\\_Yy-hkbvR-CuvqimOUOKtbGRzMzgIPUNRvBMVVVoDbgImnyTTMF5](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41858874.pdf?casa_token=IUeKFcnJWywAAAAA:h8b2_wsubIvmZqvWVZQzJCgdhzkRBGOYdR_5jItW6LvfpWqYx8fAnXNTEEJwf83U_Yy-hkbvR-CuvqimOUOKtbGRzMzgIPUNRvBMVVVoDbgImnyTTMF5)

*the creation of new states in India has been raised from time to time based on ethnic, linguistic, cultural and developmental differences. The demand of new states based on these factors has justified on the ground of promoting the democratic and federal structure of the country. However, political motive behind these demands cannot be ignored. With the coming of election, these demands get fanned and creations of new states are put as a solution for all the problems to the electorate. Electoral politics behind these demands and the acceptance of these demands has remained an important factor in state reorganization in India.”*

Thus, cry for separate statehood is consistent both in the larger states like Maharashtra<sup>29</sup> and in the smaller states like West Bengal<sup>30</sup> since long back, with their subnational sub-versions; something not yet endorsed by the law of the land, yet remain pregnant with potential prospect of newer statehood to their credit across the Republic in time ahead. Compared to other states, cases of states sharing international borderlines are complicated since the Union of India ought to deal with such reorganization with due diligence vis-à-vis bilateral and federal relations alike; more so while there are consistent border disputes on inconsistent borderlines with neighbours. The regional realities in the states reign the reasoning and the realpolitik behind reorganization; something also applicable to those sharing international borderlines are no exception to this end. For instance, along the long international borderlines between West Bengal and Bangladesh, both citizens and foreigners share the same vernacular; something sufficient to leave the non-Bengali cadre of armed forces with dissimilar

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<sup>29</sup> SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (NAGPUR): ‘I wish to bring out the fact that the demand of statehood for Vidarbha is that of restoration unlike other such demands for statehood. Vidarbha demand is not a reaction to the announcement of Telengana but it is the oldest one as would be evident from the fact that the proposal of a separate Vidarbha State has been studied and recommended by various authorities and committees set up by the Government for more than 125 years.’ <https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/743990/1/9982.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> ‘The sub-regional movement is based on sub-regionalism. It is a conscious and deliberate effort to achieve a definite political goal. The goal is to attain equal right with the majority community or political autonomy within the frame work of the state. The people are mobilized, organized and put pressure on the authority to achieve their and they adopt a comprehensive programme to ventilate their grievances and to demonstrate their strength. ... In the postcolonial Bengal many movements were raised, and also continued for their separate identities in the north Bengal.’  
Ram Krishna Biswas, Sub-regional Movement in Postcolonial North Bengal, Journal of People’s History and Culture, Vol. 2, No. 1, June 2016, p. 72  
<https://gsmp.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/11-2.pdf>

vernacular background confused about mutual separation between the peoples. On the contrary, while posted along the long international borderlines between Manipur and Myanmar, the cadre of armed forces from other regions is left confused about how to handle the hostility between co-citizens of India with similar physical features, yet dissimilar ethnic background; more than foreigners' illegal immigration from the neighbourhood. Taken together, poles apart regional concerns form tributaries to the turbulent unity and integrity of the Nation. The States' reorganization policy along these international borderlines, therefore, deserves two-fold care and caution: (i) upon the international relations by the Republic of India, (ii) upon the federal relations by the Union of India. Instances of inconveniences are innumerable across the subcontinent; something in need of stoic silence as authorial choice out of prudence. Not every silence sounds voicelessness; similar is the case of deafening authorial silence here.

## V. Tectonic Shift in Response of Regional Renaissance

The ideation of 'Bharata', narrativized by Vyasa in his epic 'the Mahabharata', reflected cultural homogeneity in this geographic subcontinent; curved out by default natural barriers, e.g., desert, mountain, ocean, and the like. Since time immemorial, the intraregional jurisdiction in the South-Asian subcontinent remained determined by respective sovereign local kingdoms; until the rise of colonial sovereign in India. In course of the regional civilizational chronicles, ideation of 'India'- as reflected in its etymology- emerged in course of the colonial discourse. Once initiated as a demographic discourse, Thus, 'Bharat' underwent metamorphosis by conversion to 'India'; a cartographic discourse out of disconnect between the colonizers and the colonized; territory and population alike. Since independence, effort is on to bridge the distance between cartography and demography by several means and methods; The maiden constitutional provision, for instance, explores the wisdom to get them synonymized.<sup>31</sup> The report of States' Reorganization Commission, published in 1953, followed by the States' Reorganization Act of 1956, were meant to bring the constitutional vision to fruition;

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<sup>31</sup> India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. The Constitution of India, Article 1.

thereby carry forward the effort to bridge distance, besides differences, between the cartographic India and the demographic Bharat; so far as possible.

During initial decade, effort was on by means of regional language as a criterion for states' reorganization; something functional behind Bombay getting split into Gujarat and Maharashtra. Even during initial decade, however, regional realpolitik played its part in states' reorganization to get the *Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams* adjacent to the territorial borderlines of Tamil Nadu included into Andhra Pradesh and few Telugu-majority districts, e.g., Gajapati, Ganjam, Koraput, etc., into Odisha. The states' reorganization regime is ridden with innumerable instances alike. In final count, regional realpolitik is on to get intraregional territorial borderlines demarcated; with due diligence upon the optimal balance between cartography and demography of the region.

In the absence of a singular political regime across the South-Asian subcontinent, regions used to enjoy sovereignty since time immemorial; until unified by the British for colonial cause. Thus, innumerable subnational identity politics struggle to earn statehood within the federalist fold of the Republic; something pregnant with domino effect to discredit the federalist politics in India. With the passage of time, therefore, Union of India slowed down the reorganization regime. Also, in a first of its kind, Jammu and Kashmir lost statehood by *sui generis* usage of a reorganization to split the state into two union territories. Thus, reversal of the earlier legacy, conversion from union territory to state as it happened in the case of Goa, reflects contemporary governmentality as response to regionalist politics across the country; something deterrent to claims for statehood out of parochial realpolitik behind. A trend appears on its rise toward states' reorganization as per administrative reasoning; something required to safeguard the unity and integrity of the Nation;<sup>32</sup> over and above the whim and fancy of mass movement fomented by the regionalist realpolitik or the unfriendly foreign forces or both from behind. The chronicles of the Republic are ridden with armed conflicts with some of its neighbours and armed conflicts with its native non-state actors with foreign patronage by cash and by kind (real weaponization) alike. The internal armed conflicts continue to

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<sup>32</sup> *Vide* Preamble to the Constitution of India, 1949.



challenge the unity and integrity of the Nation; even in course of daily discourse.<sup>33</sup> While USA can afford political federalism with its given history and geography, India cannot afford the same with its given history and geography and, therefore, is adhered to administrative federalism; something suggested by implication in its own Constitution.

While external aggression remains a concern for bilateral relations between the neighbours, internal aggression but remains an unsettled question of federal relations with plenty of parties involved therein, e.g., the Union of India, existing region with statehood, emerging region with potential statehood, sub-state actors like political outfits, non-state actors like hostile outfits, etc. Why regional unrest remains on for several decades of constitutional governance in the country deserves introspection for the statecraft as a political institution. Whether and how far longevity of the unrest in poorest of the poor regions immediately besides those in abundance are insignia of regional disparity vis-à-vis distribution of material resources remain moot points for sociology of constitutional governance in India; something to be read in between the given lines by means of a creative construction of the constitutional version with contemporary subversion;<sup>34</sup> whether or how far incidental or intentional is a point apart. Also, it falls beyond the domain of jural studies. The statal engagement in armed conflict with its own public but poses tailender of the Republic.

## VI. Conclusion

A tectonic shift in the states' reorganization regime is clear and unambiguous in its odyssey during seven decades (1956-2025). While governmentality behind states' reorganization placed priority upon regional political culture in course of initial decades, governmentality underwent a paradigm shift to place priority upon regional

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<sup>33</sup> Recognising LWE (Left Wing Extremism) as a grave threat to not only security, but to the country's democratic fabric, the Ministry of Home Affairs under Shri Amit Shah, has recently launched an aggressive campaign to eradicate it by March 2026, in addition to ongoing efforts. *Vide* Rajeev Kumar Sharma, in *Vigilant India*, Volume 12, Issue 16-30 September, 2024, page 3 [https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/17-12-2024-Left-Wing%20Extremism-%20Vigilant%20India,%20\(%2016-30%20Sep,2024\)%20Year-2,%20Volume%20No-12%20Low%20File.pdf](https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/17-12-2024-Left-Wing%20Extremism-%20Vigilant%20India,%20(%2016-30%20Sep,2024)%20Year-2,%20Volume%20No-12%20Low%20File.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> *Supra*, n. 20.

political economy in course of recent decades. Thus, with the passage of time, We, the People of India, witness a slow-yet-steady replacement of regional language by regional development in course of regional reorganization discourse. In a mass movement for statehood, the regional people of Telengana sharing the same vernacular fomented intraregional rift with those in Andhra Pradesh to force the Union of India succumb to the regional pressure politics out of regional developmental agenda as the realpolitik behind. With a similar realpolitik behind, the regional people went with the revocation of special status from Kashmir under the Constitution and the withdrawal of statehood from Jammu and Kashmir without noise against regional reorganization on a clear assurance for regional developmental.<sup>35</sup> The constitutionality of such a bizarre reorganization but finds endorsement by the Apex Court.<sup>36</sup> Taken together, writing of the wall for the regional reorganization regime hardly needs treatise.

The course of regional reorganization discourse in seven decades (1956-2025), therefore, underwent a zigzag shift of state governmentality in a primarily case-specific regime, followed by purely need-based policy choice; without grammar behind the states' reorganization regime. The statehood as claimed by dominant tribes in the North-Eastern Region during earlier decades did not indulge in the balkanization of states in the region. Likewise, resistance against claims for statehood by dominant communities in and around the central India in later decades did not indulge in the balkanization of states in the region. Despite poles apart policy choices, the unity and integrity of the Nation thereby remain fortified by means of reasoning and realpolitik behind.

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<sup>35</sup> 'The development in Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh could not be done on levels which the region deserved. After the removal of this flaw from the system, the people of Jammu-Kashmir will not only have a better present but also a bright future ahead.'  
Address of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the Nation on Revocation of Article 370 & 35A and Reorganisation of Jammu-Kashmir, *Let's Come Together to Build a New India ... A New Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh*, Kamal Sandesh, Dr. Mookherjee Smruti Nyas, New Delhi, 2019, page 9 [https://www.bjp.org/files/kamal-sandesh-documents/eng-a-370-national-integration-special\\_1.pdf](https://www.bjp.org/files/kamal-sandesh-documents/eng-a-370-national-integration-special_1.pdf)

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<sup>36</sup> In re: Article 370 of the Constitution, in the Supreme Court of India, on December 11, 2023  
<https://www.scobserver.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Judgement-Abrogation-of-Article-370.pdf>