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Q6

Has the formation of linguistic states strengthened the cause of Indian unity?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS I · 12 marks · Post-independence Consolidation

Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.

Core demand of the question

- Has the formation of linguistic states strengthened the cause of Indian unity?
- Give a balanced answer with the 1950s reorganisation, later states, and remaining strains
- Keep the explanation within a 12.5-mark length

Revision summary

Andhra 1953 and the 1956 Act made language the main basis of the state map.

Mother-tongue government reduced the sense of internal colonialism in the south and elsewhere.

Regional parties mostly chose to rule states rather than leave India.

Border, river, and nativist conflicts continue and need minority and Centre-state tools.

On balance, linguistic states have been a method of unity, not a rehearsal for partition.

Flow diagram

Language identity -> States Reorganisation 1956

States Reorganisation 1956 -> Unity through recognition

States Reorganisation 1956 -> Border river sons-of-soil

Border river sons-of-soil -> Federal bargaining

Unity through recognition -> Indian Union

Federal bargaining -> Indian Union

Conclusion

- **Answer yes, with conditions:** language states strengthened unity by recognising diversity, provided the Centre holds defence, currency, and a common market, and provided minorities are not crushed in the name of the state language.
- Point to accommodation, not to a myth that 1956 ended all regionalism.

Linguistic states have strengthened Indian unity by giving democracy a mother tongue and by pulling regional pride inside the Union. They have not abolished rivalry, but they replaced many exit threats with bargaining inside the Constitution.

Facts & figures

Potti Sriramulu, 1952

Fast unto death that precipitated the creation of Andhra state in 1953.

States Reorganisation Commission

Fazl Ali commission whose report guided the linguistic map enacted in 1956.

States Reorganisation Act, 1956

Law that redrew most of India into language-based states and union territories.

Bombay split, 1960

Creation of Gujarat and Maharashtra after bilingual Bombay proved unstable.

Punjab Reorganisation, 1966

Division into Punjab and Haryana, with Chandigarh as a union territory, on language and Sikh political lines.

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