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Q11

The political and administrative reorganization of states and territories has been a continuous ongoing process since the mid-nineteenth century. Discuss with examples.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · GS I · 15 marks · World's Physical Geography

Salient features of world's physical geography.

Core demand of the question

- The political and administrative reorganization of states and territories has been a continuous ongoing process since the mid-nineteenth century. Discuss with examples
- Cover Crown provinces, linguistic states, the north-east, new states after 2000, and Union Territories
- Keep a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Crown rule after 1858 carved and merged provinces, including the Bengal partition of 1905.

Independence integrated princely states, then the 1956 Act made language the main state principle.

Bombay 1960, Punjab 1966, and north-eastern states showed the map was still moving.

2000's three states and Telangana 2014 split units inside older language regions.

Union Territories, including the 2019 J&K change, keep reorganisation alive.

Introduction

From the 1850s the map of Indian government has been redrawn as conquest, Crown rule, language, tribe, and administrative convenience demanded. Reorganisation is therefore a habit of the modern Indian state, not a one-time act of 1956.

Body

Crown and late-colonial map

- After 1858 the Crown inherited Company presidencies and then carved Chief Commissioner's provinces, as in the Central Provinces, to tighten civil and forest control.
- The 1905 partition of Bengal, reversed in 1911, showed that administrative convenience and communal arithmetic could split a cultural region and then be forced back.
- The Government of India Act, 1935, enlarged provincial autonomy and separated Burma (1937), which was an imperial reorganisation of the Indian Empire's outer ring.
- Princely states remained a parallel map until 1947, so political India was already two kinds of territory before Independence.

Integration and the linguistic settlement

- 1947-49 integration of princely states, and the 1950 Constitution's Parts A, B, C, and D, turned a patchwork into a Union that still needed a rational map.
- **Andhra (1953)** after Potti Sriramulu's fast, and the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, made language the main provincial principle, with Bombay and Punjab still unsettled.
- Bombay split into Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960; Punjab, Haryana, and a Union Territory of Chandigarh followed in 1966, showing that 1956 was a station, not a terminus.
- Himachal Pradesh moved from Union Territory to state (1971), which is the same logic of upgrading administration as people and roads thickened.

North-east, small states, and later cuts

- **Nagaland (1963)**, and the North-Eastern Areas Reorganisation of 1971-72 that produced Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura as states, answered hill politics that language commissions had not settled.
- Sikkim's 1975 accession as a state added a Himalayan case of reorganisation by referendum and constitutional amendment.
- Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand in 2000 split large Hindi-belt and tribal-industrial units for governance and identity.
- Telangana in 2014 divided Andhra Pradesh on a regional-development claim inside one language, proving that linguistic unity does not freeze internal maps.
- Jammu and Kashmir's 2019 reorganisation into Union Territories changed a state into federally administered units, the latest sharp example of ongoing territorial politics.

Union Territories and the city

- Delhi, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir show that the Union still uses UTs where capital, colonial leftover, island, or security logic outweighs full statehood.
- The process continues whenever a hill, a city, or a linguistic minority finds the existing unit too large or too hostile.

Flow diagram

Crown provinces 1858 -> 1935 provinces
 1935 provinces -> 1947 to 50 integration
 1947 to 50 integration -> 1956 linguistic states
 1956 linguistic states -> NE small states 2000s
 NE small states 2000s -> UTs 2019 map

Conclusion

Since the mid-nineteenth century India has redrawn provinces for empire, language, tribe, development, and security. 1956 was the largest linguistic settlement, not the last word; examples from Bengal 1905 to Telangana 2014 and the 2019 Union Territories prove continuity.

Facts & figures

1858

Crown took over from the Company; provincial administration became a direct imperial craft.

Bengal partition, 1905 / 1911

Split and reunion that showed colonial reorganisation could be political, not only technical.

States Reorganisation Act, 1956

Main linguistic redrawing of India after the SRC.

Nagaland, 1963; NE 1971-72

Hill and tribal statehood outside the 1956 language template.

2000 and 2014

Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, then Telangana, as later waves of state-making.

J&K, 2019

Reorganisation of a state into Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

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