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Q7(b)

Do you think that there has been a gradual shift in the basis on which the demands for the creation of new States have been raised in different regions of India? Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Indian Nationalism

Indian Nationalism: Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle; Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the socialists.

Core demand of the question

- Do you think that there has been a gradual shift in the basis on which the demands for the creation of new States have been raised in different regions of India? Explain. (15 marks)

Revision summary

The first reorganisation treated language as the main basis of states.

Later demands added backwardness, tribal and hill identity, and distance from the capital.

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Telangana show the mixed new basis.

- **The shift is gradual:** identity did not vanish; development arguments grew louder.

Federal prizes and coalition politics at the Centre make both kinds of claim viable.

Introduction

Early new-state demands were mainly about language and cultural nationality inside the Union. Later demands added backwardness, tribal autonomy, administrative distance, and resource control. There has been a gradual shift in emphasis, not a total replacement of identity by economics.

Body

The first basis

- The **States Reorganisation Commission** and the 1956 linguistic map answered the Congress-era promise of language as the unit of democratic life.
- Andhra, then others, treated language as the basis of recognition, after the trauma of linguistic agitation.
- This fitted the founding task of a common nation that still named diversity, as **Austin** described.

The shift

- Punjab, Bombay, and later hill and tribal movements mixed language with minority security and distinct way of life.
- Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and **Uttarakhand (2000)** were argued as underdevelopment, interior distance from a plains capital, and tribal or hill identity together.

- Telangana joined linguistic sameness with a grievance of unequal development inside a language state.
- Smaller-state talk in the Hindi belt often cites governance quality and proximity of government, a **Kothari**-era participation claim in territorial form.

How to judge "gradual shift"

- **Yes:** the public reason has moved from "our language is not the state's language" toward "our region is neglected, our resources are extracted, our administration is far".
- **No, not a clean break:** identity never left. Tribal status, historical sub-regional honour, and sometimes religious demography still organise mobilisations.
- **Jaffrelot's caste federalism also matters: a new state can recast who is a majority for Mandal-type politics.**
- The **73rd Amendment** did not satisfy all regional elites; some still want a full state, not only a panchayat.

Explanation

- Federal structure makes statehood the prize. Electoral system makes a concentrated regional bloc able to extract it through national coalitions.
- After 1991, growth and mineral rents raised the stakes of who controls a state government.
- So the basis shifted toward development and governance while remaining a politics of identity.

Flow diagram

Language 1956 -> Shift
Shift -> Development distance resources
Shift -> Identity still present
New states 2000 Telangana -> Development distance resources

Conclusion

There has been a gradual shift from language-as-nation to a mix of development, distance, tribal autonomy, and sub-regional honour. Identity remains. The shift is in the coalition of reasons that can succeed in Delhi, especially after 2000 and Telangana.

Facts & figures

SRC / 1956

Linguistic reorganisation of states as the classic first basis.

2000

Creation of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand.

Telangana, 2014

A language-sharing split justified by regional development grievance.

Article 3

Parliament may form new states; political basis is extra-constitutional mobilisation plus Union will.

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