



Belagavi Dispute

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This article is based on **“What is the Maharashtra-Karnataka tussle over Belagavi all about?”** which was published in The Hindu on 05/01/2020. It describes the political tussle between Maharashtra and Karnataka over an area called Belagavi.

Recently, there has been a political tussle between leaders of Maharashtra and Karnataka over an area called Belagavi. Belagavi is an area in Karnataka, which has a sizeable Marathi-speaking population and has been at the heart of a five-decade-old border row between Karnataka and Maharashtra.

- Some sections in Maharashtra expressed discontent with the implementation of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. They opposed the addition of the Marathi-speaking areas into Karnataka and thereby demanded readjustment of its border with Karnataka.
 - Maharashtra’s claim on Belagavi and surrounding areas (Karwar, Bidar and Gulbarga districts in Karnataka,) were based on Marathi-speaking population and linguistic homogeneity.
- On the other hand, Karnataka holds the view that the settlement of boundaries as per the States Reorganisation Act is final. It has argued that the boundary of the State was neither tentative nor flexible.
 - The issue might reopen border issues that have not been contemplated under the Act, and therefore such a demand should not be permitted.
- The case is still being heard by the Supreme Court of India.



What is the dispute?

According to the **State Reorganisation Act of 1956**, Belagavi was handed over to the Mysore state, which was renamed as Karnataka in 1973.

- In 1957, slighted by the implementation of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, Maharashtra demanded readjustment of its border with Karnataka.
- Maharashtra invoked Section 21 (2) (b) of the Act and submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Home Affairs stating its objection to Marathi-speaking areas being added to Karnataka.
- The central government constituted the **Mahajan Committee in 1966** to assess the situation. Representatives from both sides, Maharashtra and the then Mysore state were part of the committee.
- In 1967, the committee recommended that some villages in Karwar, Haliyal and Suparna talukas of Karnataka be given to Maharashtra but left Belagavi with the southern state.
- In 2006, the Supreme Court held that the issue should be resolved through mutual negotiation and that linguistic criterion should not be considered as it may create more practical problems.
- The case is still being heard by the Supreme Court.

Reorganisation of States in India

- At the time of independence in 1947, India consisted of nearly 550 disjointed princely states.
- In 1950, the Constitution contained a four-fold classification of the states of the Indian Union—**Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D States**.
 - Part-A states comprised nine erstwhile governor's provinces of British India.
 - Part-B states consisted of nine erstwhile princely states with legislatures.
 - Part-C states consisted of erstwhile chief commissioner's province of British India and some of the erstwhile princely states.
 - Part-D state comprised of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands only.
- 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 this was a **temporary arrangement**.
- On account of the multilingual nature and differences that existed between various states, there was a need for the states to be reorganized on a permanent basis.
- In this context, in 1948, **SK Dhar committee** - was appointed by the government to look into the need for the reorganization of states on a **linguistic basis**.
 - The Commission preferred reorganisation of states on the basis of administrative convenience including historical and geographical considerations instead of on linguistic lines.
 - This created much resentment and led to the appointment of another Linguistic Provinces Committee.
- In December 1948, the **JVP Committee** comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya was formed to study the issue.

The Committee, in its report submitted in April 1949, rejected the idea of reorganisation of states on a linguistic basis but said that the issue could be looked at afresh in the light of public demand.
- However, due to protests, in October 1953, the Government of India created the first linguistic state, known as Andhra state, by separating the Telugu speaking areas from the Madras state.
- On December 22, 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru appointed a **commission under Fazl Ali** to consider the reorganisation of states.
 - The commission submitted its report in 1955 and it suggested that the whole country is to be divided into 16 states and three centrally administered areas.
 - The government, while not agreeing with the recommendations entirely, divided the country into 14 states and 6 union territories under the **States Reorganisation Act that was passed in November 1956**.
- In 1960, the state of **Bombay** was bifurcated to create the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra following violence and agitation.
- In 1963, the state of **Nagaland** was created for the sake of the Nagas and the total number of states stood at 16.

- The areas of Chandernagore, Mahe, Yaman and Karekal from France, and the territories of **Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese**, were either made union territories or were joined with the neighbouring states, after their acquisition.
- Based on the **Shah Commission report** in April 1966, the **Punjab Reorganisation Act** was passed by the Parliament.
 - Following this, the state of Haryana got the Punjabi-speaking areas while the hilly areas went to the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh.
 - **Chandigarh**, which was made a Union Territory, served as the common capital of Punjab and Haryana.
- In 1969 and in 1971, the states of **Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh** came into being respectively. With the Union Territories of Tripura and Manipur being converted into states, the total number of Indian states rose to 21.
- Thereafter, **Sikkim in 1975** and **Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh** in February 1987 also acquired the status of states.
- In May 1987, **Goa became the 25th state** of the Indian Union, while three new states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal were formed in November 2000.
- In 2014, **Telangana** officially became India's 29th state.
- On 5th August 2019, President of India in the exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 370 of the Constitution had issued the **Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019**.

This divided the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two new Union Territories (UTs): Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.
- Recently, **Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Act, 2019** has merged the Union Territories (UTs) of Daman and Diu (D&D) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (DNH).
- **As on 1 January 2020, India is comprised of 28 states and 8 union territories.**

Drishti Mains Question

The reorganisation of states in India is an unfinished task. Discuss.
