



Demand for Dravida Nadu

This editorial is based on [“Dravida Nadu: Once a belief, now party tool”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 10/07/2022. It talks about the demand of Dravida Nadu and related challenges.

For Prelims: Dravida Nadu, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, Devolution of powers, Justice Party, Self-Respect Movement, Gross Domestic Product, Indian Peacekeeping Force, Finance Commission, Union of States, Nationalism, All India Service, Three language formula

For Mains: Background of Dravida Nadu, Cooperative Federalism, Empowerment of Inter-State Council

Dravida Nadu as a political idea was originally floated by **Periyar E.V. Ramasamy** who came up with the slogan **“Tamil Nadu for Tamils”** in 1938 in **response to the plan to introduce compulsory learning of Hindi across India**.

Initially, the demand of Dravida Nadu proponents was limited to Tamil-speaking region, but later, it was expanded to include other Indian states with **Dravidian-language speakers** in majority (present day **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Karnataka**). Other names for the proposed sovereign state included **“South India”, “Deccan Federation”** and **“Dakshinapath”**.

At various time periods, demand for Dravida Nadu can be interpreted differently. Sometimes it has meant **greater [devolution of powers to the states](#)**, at others it's meant **full [sovereignty and complete secession](#)**.

What is the Background of Dravida Nadu?

- **Before Independence:**
 - The **concept of Dravida Nadu had its root in the Anti-Brahminism movement in Tamil Nadu**, with early demands of [social equality](#), and greater power and control.
 - However, over time, it came to include a separatist movement, **demanding a sovereign state for the Tamil people**.
 - **In 1921**, the [Justice Party](#) was the major political party backing this movement.
 - At the time, the presence of Brahmins in the Madras government was disproportionately higher than their population in the state.
 - **In 1925, Periyar started the Self-Respect Movement.**
 - He **emphasised the distinct cultural identity of the Tamil nation**.
 - **In 1938**, the **Justice Party and Self-Respect Movement came together**, representing the merger of the party and the movement.
 - In **1944**, its new outfit was named **Dravidar Kazhagam**.
- **Post-Independence:**
 - **In 1956**, [States Reorganisation Act](#), which created linguistic States, weakened the demand further.

- **In the 1980s**, a minor militant organisation called **Tamil Nadu Liberation Army** revived the demand for **Dravida Nadu**, when the [Indian Peacekeeping Force \(IPKF\)](#) was sent to **Sri Lanka**.

What are the Reasons for Demanding a Separate State?

- **Linguistic Factor:** The idea of **making Hindi the common language was not acceptable to Periyar**, who viewed it as an attempt to make Tamils subordinate to North Indians which gave a **thrust for separate Dravida Nadu**.
 - They **continued to protest against the introduction of Hindi in education**.
- **Political Factors:** **State autonomy has been one of the top political agendas of the political parties in Tamil Nadu**, with its election manifestos beginning with a reference to federalism.
 - Parties used a **unique medium of propagation of its ideas, through the Tamil film productions**.
- **Economic Factors:** From an economic point of view, their argument points out that they receive **inadequate benefits in comparison to their contribution to the Indian Economy**.
 - It is the **second largest economy in India** and **contributes 8.8% to the [National Gross Domestic Product](#)**.
- **Demographic Factors:** Northern states have higher population growth than the southern states.
 - **Population is one factor determining [Finance Commission](#) devolutions** and the **state-wise distribution of [Lok Sabha](#) seats was frozen on the population basis of the 1971 census** through a Constitutional amendment valid until 2026.
 - In this context, **[demographic divergence](#) has led to the origination of sub-nationalism**. Southern states like Tamil Nadu **feared substantial seat share in the Parliament of India that urged the [separatist tendency](#)**.

What Challenges are Associated with Demand for a Separate State?

- **Pandorabox of Issues:** Autonomy of one state will open the **pandora box of issues among other states** that will impact effective governance and **spirit of [Nationalism](#)**.
- **Against Constitutional Provision:** **India** is an indestructible '**Union of States**' rather than just a mere federation.
 - Under **[Article 3 of Constitution of India](#)**, the **states have no right to secede from the Union**. Thus, the demand for autonomy of state is against the Constitution.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Effective All India Service:** Being a **centralised permanent entity**, the **[All India Services](#)** form the basic administrative system of India to devise and implement welfare policies, developmental schemes and **ensure efficient functioning of government machinery at the grassroots**.
 - **Effective All India Service** will not only ensure uniformity in administration throughout the nation, but **also spread the message of [integrity](#) among the various parts of the country**.
- **Promoting Cooperative Federalism:** On the premise that strong states make a strong nation, promotion of **[cooperative federalism](#)** will guide all the governing bodies to come forward and cooperate to resolve common **social, political, economic and civic problems**.
 - According to the **Sarkaria Commission's report** on Centre-State Relations, If the economic liberalisation and development of states is undertaken in a planned manner, the **separatist tendencies will be automatically controlled**.
- **Promotion of Composite Culture:** **Three language formula** can be implemented in an inclusive manner; uniform recognition can be given to all the languages of India.
 - To inculcate the feeling of oneness, **[Incredible India programme](#)** in all parts of India can be promoted in true spirit.
- **Empowering Inter-State Council:** **Cognizance of regional problems and devising solutions** for the same at **inter-state council level** should be maintained in true spirit.
 - The most serious clashes have arisen over the sharing of river waters, with every state

aiming to maximise its share. Such issues can be addressed in a cooperative manner.

Drishti Mains Question

How far do you think that demand for state autonomy has shaped the nature of federalism in India? Cite some examples to validate your answer.

UPSC Civil Service Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Which one of the following is not a feature of Indian federalism? (2017)

- (a)** There is an independent judiciary in India.
- (b)** Powers have been clearly divided between the Centre and the States.
- (c)** The federating units have been given unequal representation in the Rajya Sabha.
- (d)** It is the result of an agreement among the federating units.

Ans: (d)

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