

# The Demand for New States in Indian Federalism - A Case Study of Telangana State

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**Abstract:** *This paper tries to argue that the demand for the new and smaller states in India at present is mostly influenced by the economic consideration and that it can be accounted within the larger context of the Indian state's policies, programs and the power of cultural pluralism and political centralism during the past two decades. It also tries to examine various debates on how the demand for new and smaller states affects the federal institutions and their governance in the country. In particular, the recent change from a one-party dominated political system to another coalition politics has created an environment that is more likely to influence the result of these movements. It covers the significance of coalition politics and impact of the recent establishment of three states Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in 2000, on the other demands of different kind of movements, claiming for separate statehood. It also provides an overview and public opinion over the demand for smaller in India through field work study of Telangana state demand.*

**Keywords:** statehood, Coalition, Constitution, Administration

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, discussion on Indian Federal system is full of controversies. Demand for smaller states has been a very prominent subject in contemporary Indian politics. A voice for separate statehood has been emerging from different regions, political groups, and cultural identities. The Indian constitution makers have adopted the Federal kind of political system in a view to increase democratic ideas and spirit by accepting, recognizing and protecting different regional identities and people rights in a plural and multi-cultural country. The framers of our constitution were very well aware of the complicate ethnic identities and plural culture of India, which has been the reason for adopting the unitary kind of federal system. (P.M.Bakshi 201:6) The article 1 of Indian constitution declares that "India shall be a union of states", which creates a controversy also whether India is a federal or a quasi-federal state.

As a consequence, demand for and formation of new states had become a regular phenomenon in democratic polity of our country. The constitutional provision under Article 3 was incorporated with a generous idea to realize geographical and economic unification aspirations of people and an instrument to achieve electoral gains. The situation given the scope of frequent demands for the creation of new states. The formation of the new states on the regional sentiments always had been a sensitive issue to Indian Union which needs to be addressed care and understanding of different problems as well. (Kalpana S. Agrahari 2014:130) Vulnerability towards national unity has been a strong factor for hesitation of union government from creation of newer states despite strong demands for it.

## 2. The States Formation in India

Initially, the linguistic states were formed which predicted that unification of the people speaking the same language as a geographic region under one state, would paved the way for

equal and rapid development of the states. However, the expectation of uniform development could not be satisfied in some of the states. As a result, demands for creation of new states started being made with greater enthusiasm. These demands of smaller states in have the following features:

- a) The region, where demand for a separate state was being claimed had a distinct culture of its own; it was further beyond the language of the state. Consequently, the region needed a separate state of its own in order to protect its distinct culture.
- b) The demand for a new state was raised in the context, where one region was more backward than rest of the state and the rulers of the state were failed to provide proper attention to the development of the region. Thus, the region demands a separate state in order to promote its own development.
- c) The demand for a separate state was being claimed, where the region was more developed than rest of the state. As a result, higher revenue from the region was spending on other regions of the state, thereby denying this region meanwhile the right share of its development. Therefore, demand was made that the region needed a state of its own in order to further its own development.

At present the demands for separate statehood both present and past share a number of characteristics like Language, control of resources and, preservation of culture and identity. In Modern days India is being asked to change the position of federal system into smaller units that encourage local-based politics. Nevertheless, what is the different from past claims for separate state is the expected outcome of these contemporary demands for new states. This is because of the initiative NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government formed three new states in 2000, which increased hopes for more demands for statehood. Moreover, the Congress party announcement in case of Telangana in 2009 also in the same way created hopes among the people to agitate for few smaller states.

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### 3. Demands for the Creation of Smaller States in India

The Prime Minister of India Sri H.D. Deve Gowda's announcement from the Red Fort on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1996 Independence Day about the creation of 'Uttarkhand' have brought the issue of reorganization of states in our country to unexpected focus and unchecked level. It has simultaneously generated optimism, skepticism, heat and genuine concern among the peoples of this country. According to B.B.Kumar the individuals, parties and the organizations in the forefronts of the new states demands are getting ready for the struggle. Rejected politicians are hopeful and are busy in working out new strategies. (B.B.Kumar 1998:16-17) the emotions are aroused. Threats and warnings are issued. The reasoning and the rationality has taken the back seat. The moral ideas of the dead demands for the states were started being focus again. Thus, the announcement unsettled many settled issues in the context of demands for separate statehood.

Demand for the creation of new states have been regular feature of the Indian politics since from reorganization of Andhra state in 1956. Such agitations are usually based on the discrimination or neglect in the arena of administration and showing disparities in development by the successive state governments. At present the union government has been under pressure for various kinds of smaller states. After the government accepted the demand of creation of Telangana, old and new demands for creation of new states in different parts of India were emerged with increased intensity including those of Coorg in Karnataka, Mithilanchal in Bihar, Saurashtra in Gujarat, Gorkhaland in West Bengal, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, and also Harit Pradesh, Purvanchal, Braj Pradesh and Awadh Pradesh in Uttar Pradesh etc.

Formation of states in India is supported by several factors such as language, religion, ethnicity, and historical legacy that provide identity to large groups of people of a region who can form themselves into a separate state. As Prof.K.C.Suri rightly said, there are various reasons such as inter-regional imbalances in development within a state, cultural differences, unequal access to employment opportunities, self-respect which are usually mentioned by the supporters for demanding of new states. All these factors combine in various ways to give rise to the demand for separate states. (K.C.Suri 2016:17) The realization of such demands depend on the political ideas of the ruling party or coalition at the national level with regard to Indian federalism and nationhood, electoral and political strategy of parties at the national and state levels, and how strongly the regional leadership can articulate the separatist demand, sustain the agitation and make a persuasive case.

**Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai** clearly says that "globalization and liberalization have led to the establishment of a global-national market economy which has given scope for private capital which leading to increase regional inequalities among states, and causing to the rising demands for smaller states".

Indeed, "economic backwardness of sub-regions within large states has emerged as vital ground on which demands for smaller states are being raised". (Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai 2011:15-17) This is evident from the various demands for statehood such as Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, Vidharbha in Maharashtra, and Bodoland in Assam etc.

Moreover, the discriminatory economic policies of the colonial state on region-wise increased to the uneven and unequal development of different regions of the country after independence. Today, we may "a pattern of capitalist development in the large states, surrounded by poorer regions which have remained backward and underdeveloped on various levels". Meanwhile "the capital is not moving from the developed to the underdeveloped areas which create an overall and balanced development of different regions within them. However, as they pointed out that "At present the demands for separate statehood from the backward regions like Telangana, Bundelkhand, Vidarbha, and Poorvanchal are claiming on the ground of equitable distribution of resources for their people who have been left out of the route of state-led development.

#### 1. The Demand for the Vidarbha State

The demand for separate state for the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra has been agitated mainly on the issue of underdevelopment of the region. It is in the Eastern part of Maharashtra. It has the total geographical area of 97,409 sq.kms and population of the region is about 1,73, 91,134, with the districts of Buldana, Akola, Amaravathi, Yavatmal, Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli. The region is comparatively less developed than Western Maharashtra. The Nine Marathi speaking districts of Vidarbha were merged with the Bombay province. Of course, Bombay remained a bilingual State up to April, 1960. The SRC recommended the formation of Vidarbha State in 1956, but the same was not formed.

As already stated the announcement on the formation of 'Uttarkhand' has instigated the protagonists of Vidarbha state also. Vidarbha Rajya Sungursh Samiti is mobilizing the support of the local politicians for the statehood. Samawaya Samiti is the common platform of the politicians working for the purpose of achieving statehood. Among the political parties, the Janata Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the various groups of the Republican Party are in favour of the statehood. The Shiva Sena opposes the idea. The party leadership has opposed the formation of Vidarbha on unclear terms. The Congress also does not believe in the separation of Vidarbha from Maharashtra.

#### 2. The Demand for the Gorkhaland State:

The demand for statehood for the Gorkhaland region of (three subdivisions of Darjeeling district namely Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong) West Bengal has been raised mainly on the issue of distinct hill culture of the region, which is different from rest of the state. The movement was started vigorously by Subhas Ghising on April 13, 1986 for separate Gorkhaland when people reacted angrily in Darjeeling Hill

due to the harassment and preventing thousands of Nepalis from the North-East, specially, the Meghalaya. (B.B.Kumar 1998:91) The area was full of the refugees and the numbers of the followers of Ghising's ideas were widened.

The movement was mostly violent one. About 1200 persons were killed and thousands were injured. More than ten thousand houses were burned. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) leader Subhash Ghising got Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council on December 26, 1988 as a result of an accord signed between the West Bengal Government, the Centre and the GNLF; Ghising heads the Councils. He was led the movement of Darjeeling Hills. He got the opportunity to develop the area through Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. It is most unfortunate that the issue of development was pushed to the background by Ghising himself and he started diverting the attention the people to non-issues very soon after the formation of the council.

### 3. The Demand for the Bodoland State:

The demand for the statehood for the Bodoland region of Assam has been raised mainly on the issue distinct tribal culture of the region, which is different from rest of the state. The Bodos were not immune to the developments in the North-East. They witnessed the formation of Tribal States in North-East with lesser population than that of the Bodos. There are two points, which are specific and need to mention in the case of the Bodoland state demand. Firstly, it was the first demand, where a state was demanded by a community without their majority in the area. Secondly, organized attacks by armed insurgent groups on the Muslim and Santal villagers took the shape of attempt towards ethnic medicine to secure higher percentage of population and hegemony.

The Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) was the first political organization of the Bodos. It was formed at Kokrajhar on February 27, 1967 under the championship of Modoram Brahma. The All Bodo Student's Union was formed later on in the 1970s. The ABSU played vital role in the political life of the Bodos later on. The Bodos started the demand for autonomous state very late almost in the mid-1980s. However, there were many attempts to promote the needs of the community in the past. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma represented before the Simon commission that the seats in the Legislative Assembly and the Government jobs should be reserved for the Tribals. According to B.B.Kumar the demands for small states in India defines all logic. The economic viability, reasonable size and population, etc. ceases to be the valid criteria for the formation of a state. The only valid criterion for the Statehood demand during the last three decades was the assertion of separate ethnic identity. This resulted into the arrest of the process of social and cultural assimilation and that of 'give and take' going on for centuries in this part of the country. The process of social distancing was deliberately started by many communities, such as, the Bodos from the Assamese.

### 4. The Demand for Saurashtra State

The demand for separate state of Saurashtra from Gujarat is likely to be an issue in the upcoming elections. This region has its own identity and it was known as the United State of Kathiawar, a mixture of princely states. In 1948, it was renamed as Saurashtra following persuasion by Ballabhbhai Patel. In 1956, it was merged with Bombay state and again merged with Gujarat state afterwards in 1960. The demand for Saurashtra was first raised in 1966 and, then, more seriously, in 1970-71 by an advocate Ratilal Tanna, who was an assistant of former Prime Minister Morarji Desai. In 2001, after the earthquake in Kutch, the demand was again made but gathered no steam until 2009 when a Member of Parliament from the Congress party from Porbandar raised the issue again.

### 5. The Demand for Koshal State

The announcement by the Home Minister of India P.Chidambaram for creation of Telangana has triggered a simmering agitation in the Koshal region demanding a separate Koshal state. (Artatrana Gochhayat 2013:8) The Koshal region also known as western Odisha basically comprises 10 districts including Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Bargarh, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Deogarh, Sonapur, Boudh and Balangir with a population of about 2.5 crores. About nearly 42 organizations from 10 districts of the Koshal region met in Balangiri and chalked a plan to take forward the movement for Koshal state. The Koshal Kranti Dal, was formed in 2007, which was an emerging political party played a key role in the agitation for the demand for separate statehood.

### 4. The Case study of Telangana State

Telangana question may be discussed for the reasons relevant as an issue of inequality, backwardness, lack of development, discrimination in allocation of funds for irrigation and creation of employment, in view of the consistent deception of leaders as well. Ever since the formation of Andhra Pradesh, there has been discrimination against Telangana in terms of the resource allocation, developmental schemes and employment generation. (B.Janardhan Rao 1997:20) Injustice and discrimination are also evident in denying spaces for Telangana and Telanganites in decision making in economic, political, social and cultural spheres. Actually Telangana is not merely a geographical dispute. It is a result of unequal development through several historical phases". There were continuous movements for separate Telangana state.

The 1969 movement, subsequently, there were several organizations emerged like Telangana Jana Sabha and Telangana Maha Sabha in the late 1990's for demanding separate Telangana state. (P.L.Vishweswar Rao 1997:56) This region is deprived of economic and social development in spite of its merger with Coastal Andhra. "Because successive governments and the ruling political parties have not only neglected to develop Telangana region but also systematically exploited it, through denying its share of funds, plundered its rich, fertile land resources and impoverished its people".



Prof. K.Jayashankar has highlighted the imbalances that still continue to exist in the levels of development between different regions of the state while analyzing comparative picture of development that has taken place in different sectors over the last 47 years. He often states that unequal distribution of river water was the root cause of separate Telangana Movement. These regional disparities can be seen in terms of irrigation, Education, industries and Employment. The Field Survey Analysis in case of Telangana

The field work was done as a part of my thesis work in the districts of Mahaboobnagar & Warangal and Universities of Palamoor and Kakatiya also in view of analyze the opinion of rural people at panchayat level and understand the aspirations of students meanwhile TJAC activists who have played crucial role in the Telangana movement over the requirement of separate statehood at present context.

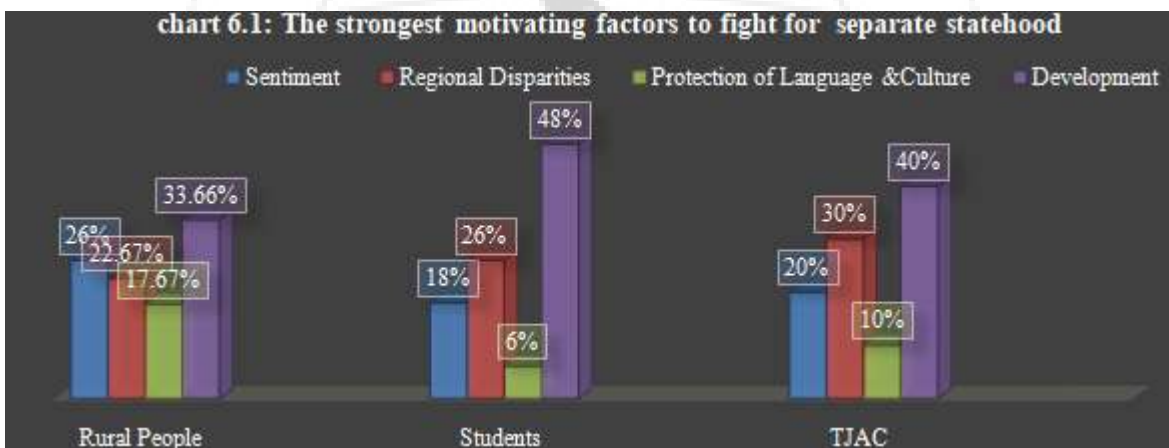
**Table 6.1:** The strongest motivating factors to fight for separate statehood?

S.No	Strongest motivating factor	Rural peoples		Students		TJAC		Grand Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Sentiment	78	26	27	18	10	20	115	23
2	Regional Disparities	68	22.67	39	26	15	30	122	24.4
3	Protection of Language & Culture	53	17.67	12	8	5	10	70	14
4	Development	101	33.66	72	48	20	40	193	38.6
Total		300	100	150	100	50	100	500	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 6.1 discusses about the motivating factors which prompted three categories of participants like rural people, Students and TJAC activists to fight for demand of separate statehood. The rural people out of 300 total respondents 78 with 26% have motivated by sentiment, 68 respondents with

22.67% have inspired by regional disparities. Moreover, 53 respondents about 17.67% have tried to promote their language and culture and 101 respondents with 33.66% have influenced by the development aspiration.



Whereas students out of 150 total respondents 27 with 18% have motivated by sentiment, 39 respondents with 26% have inspired by regional disparities. Moreover, 12 respondents about 8% have tried to promote their language and culture and 72 respondents with 48% have influenced by the development aspiration. TJAC activists out of total 50 respondents 10 with 20% have motivated by sentiment, 15 respondents with 30% have inspired by regional disparities. Moreover, 5 respondents about 10% have tried to promote their language and culture and 20 respondents with 40% have influenced by the development aspiration.

sentiment about 26% and then regional disparities about 22.67% and lastly language and culture about 17.67% . Student’s section respondents were largely motivated by development factor about 26% and sentiment of separate statehood about 18% and the impact of language and culture is less about 8% only. TJAC activist’s majority respondents about 40% have influenced by the development aspiration and 30% have inspired by regional disparities and then 20% of respondents were motivated by sentiment, 15 respondents with Moreover, 5 respondents about 10% have tried to promote their language and culture. The overall observation of the table and graph shows that majority of respondents from three groups have largely inspired firstly by the development factor and secondly by regional disparities.

The findings of the above table 6.1 indicate that majority of respondents from the section of rural people have got influenced highly by development factor about 33.16% and

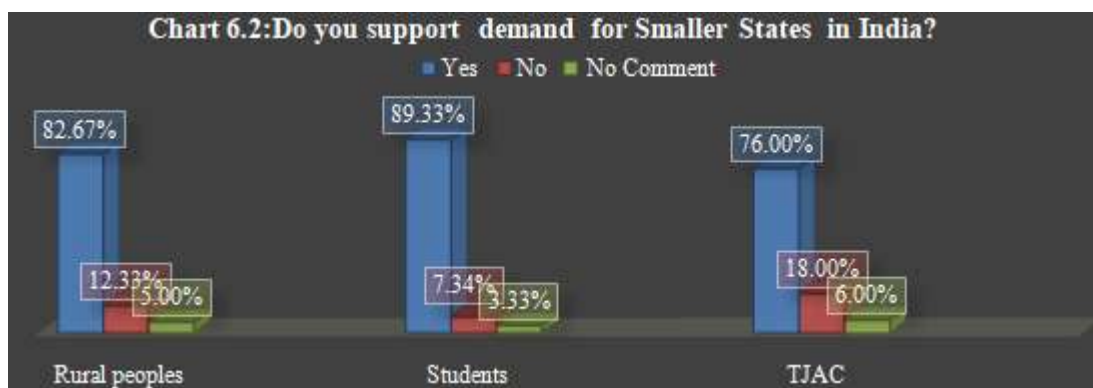
**Table 6.2: Do you support demand for smaller states in India?**

S.No	Response on Demands for smaller states	Rural people		Students		TJAC		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Yes	248	83	134	89.3	38	76	420	84
2	No	37	12	11	7.33	9	18	57	11.4
3	No Comment	15	5	5	3.33	3	6	23	4.6
Total		300	100	150	100	50	100	500	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 6.1 discusses about the aspirations of the people and opinion of the people over the present burning issue of demand for smaller states in India at village panchayat level in two districts. This table shows that out of total 300 respondents from both the districts of Mahaboobnagar & Warangal, 248 respondents with 83% have supported the

demand for smaller states in view of their interests and regional disparities and underdevelopment and 37 respondents with 12% have rejected the demands for saying that relations and affections, unity among the people would disintegrated and 15 respondents with 5% were not willing to respond.



The findings of the shows that majority of respondents from the districts of Mahaboobnagar & Warangal, have supported about 82.67% of respondents were supported the demand of smaller states for other regions also. Most of the respondents among the students from both the Universities about 89.33%

of respondents were supported the demand of smaller states for other regions also. Whereas from TJAC section majority of respondents mostly about 76% were also supported the smaller states in view of the concerned regions aspirations.

**Table 6.3: Do you support demand for Smaller states on what grounds in India?**

S.No	Aspects to support to Smaller states	Rural peoples		Students		TJAC		Grand Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Backwardness and Underdevelopment	159	53	72	48	23	46	254	50.8
2	Language & Culture	63	21	42	28	14	28	119	23.8
3	Regional Disparities	66	22	29	19.3	8	16	103	20.6
4	Above All	12	4	7	4.66	5	10	24	4.8
Total		300	100	150	100	50	100	500	100

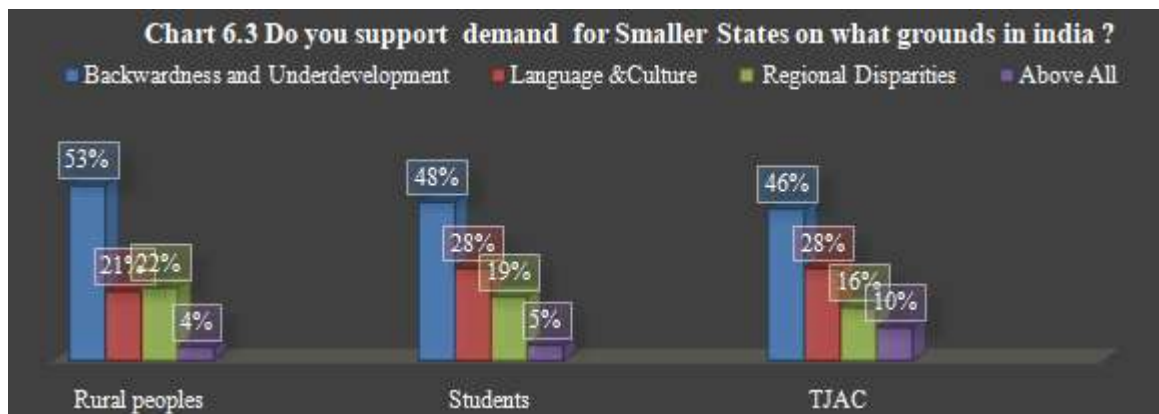
Source: Primary Data

Table 6.3 discusses about the aspirations of the people and opinion of the people over the present burning issue of demand for smaller states in India at village panchayat level in two districts. This table shows that out of total 300 respondents from both the districts of Mahaboobnagar & Warangal, 159 respondents with 53% have supported the demand for smaller states in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment and 63 respondents with 21% have felt the need of the promotion of language and culture and 66 respondents with 22% have supported on the basis of regional disparities and very few 12 respondents with 4% have supported the demands for statehood on the above all grounds.

This table shows that out of total 150 respondents from both the universities of Kakatiya and Palamoor, 72 respondents with 48% have supported the demand for smaller states in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment and 42 respondents with 28% have felt the need of the promotion of language and culture and 29 respondents with 19.33% have supported on the basis of regional disparities and very few 7 respondents with 4.66% have supported the demands for statehood on the above all grounds. Whereas from TJAC activists out of total 50 respondents 23 respondents with 46% have supported the demand for smaller states in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment and 14 respondents with 28% have felt the need of the promotion of language and

culture and 8 respondents with 16% have supported on the basis of regional disparities and very few 5 respondents with

10% have supported the demands for statehood on the grounds of above all.



As far as the demand for smaller states and supporting grounds are concerned, it is found that majority of respondents from rural people at panchayati level are recognized importance of separate statehood, about 53% of respondents were supported the demand of smaller states for other regions in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment, 21% of respondents have supported on the basis of the promotion of language and culture and 22% of respondents have supported the demand for smaller states on the basis of regional disparities. students from the Universities also recognized importance of separate statehood, about 48% of respondents were supported the demand of smaller states in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment and 28% of respondents have supported on the basis of promotion of language and culture. Moreover, 19.33% of respondents have supported on the basis of regional disparities. Whereas from TJAC section majority of respondents were felt the requirement of separate statehood, about 46% of respondents supported smaller states in view of the backwardness and underdevelopment and 28% of respondents have supported the demand for smaller states on the basis of the promotion of language and culture of the particular region. Moreover, 16% of respondents were emphasized the need of smaller states on the basis of regional disparities.

## 5. Conclusion

People demanding for separate states on the basis of different reasons like backwardness, under development, language, regional identity and other factors which are not a good indication and this will somehow damage brotherhood and unity of the country as well. The regionalism is good for the development of people of a region but it is not good in view of the nation's unity and integrity. As the demand for a smaller state emerges in the name of regionalism and it has inherently political self interests. The political parties are instigating the regional demands for the sake of electoral gains across the country. Meanwhile, state governments are not able to eradicate imbalances of development because of the discriminative policies. Further, the successive governments failed to implement the safeguards, promises, assurances

which were intended to reduction of regional disparities. The growing awareness among the people of backward regions that they are being neglected and discriminated against promoted the feeling of regionalism along with the regional disparities. The political leaders completely try to gain advantage of this situation and Endeavour to project themselves as the champions of certain regions in order to maintain and preserve their political positions. Demands for smaller states have been regular phenomenon of India politics since the formation of Andhra state in the Indian federation. The agitations for separate statehood based on the claims of neglect or discrimination, regional disparities make them to suffer by the relevant successive state governments and central government as well.

Through this study an important thing one can understand in the context of demands for smaller states, that the demand for statehood need to be addressed firstly the feeling of discrimination among the people, along with the real and existing discrimination as well. Moreover, it is not possible to suppress the demand for smaller states across the country permanently. Though oppressed for time being, genuine steps need to take to solve the known differences and imbalances between the regions otherwise it is impossible to stop the upcoming demands for statehood. The TRS government has fulfilled the symbolic and emotional needs of the people for recognition of their identity through realization of separate state of Telangana so far. But, it is still need to address the expectations of the people and meet the challenge of providing the benefits of employment, irrigation and agriculture to the disadvantaged sections of people.

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