

DEBATE: EMBATTLED STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA QUESTION

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When there are so many Hindi states, why not two or three Telugu States?

This is a question often raised by separatists, and not much answered with a scientific outlook. Did Andhras not fight for separation in 1953, why not separate Telengana now? They ask. There are only movements for separation, and none for integration, anywhere in the world, argues a wiseacre! It is a concocted movement, he asserts. In the process some raise the question of linguistic states also, some of them saying it was a blunder to form linguistic states. Such a gamut of questions calls for answers, and here is a small and brief attempt. There was a day we Telugus used to blame north Indians and Delhites lumping all of us as **Madrasis**. We used to take pride in Telugu identity (some remembered NTR) and also laughed at ignorance of the northerners. The fact is, north or south, ignorance, opportunism and chauvinism go together in these matters.

For an average Telugu, or even a journalist or a politician or a quiz master, UP, MP, Bihar, Himachal, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan once constituted Hindi states. Three more are added in 2000 AD: Uttranchal (renamed uttarakhand), Jharkhand, Chattisgarh. The population of all these states adds up to some 46 crores as per 2001 census. In 2001 census, those listed with Hindi as their mother tongue were 42 crore. Who are the rest? Is it a fact that those shown as Hindi-speaking are really so? A little study brings out the following highlights.

There are 1652 mother tongues listed in India officially, and 22 languages in 8th schedule of the Constitution. And some more are to be added to that list.

They cannot all be lumped as Hindi States!

The newly carved out states of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh have their own distinct languages, literatures, some have separate official status and scripts of their own.

Maithili (spoken by 4 crore people) and Santhali which we had lumped together as part of Hindi states

were officially given separate language status (8th Schedule of the Constitution) in 2003. Some more are in the queue. Bhojpuri spoken by 15 crore people (in UP and Bihar mainly) is near to getting this status.

In earlier times, UP was actually called United Provinces, and MP as Central Provinces. Mark the plural. They were not compact entities nor Hindi-speaking states. In fact, when East India company arrived, there was no Hindi language as we know it now. Bihar was called as Northern Frontier province, and people there spoke at least four different languages before Hindi arrived there. Some of them had their own scripts, had official status too.

Haryana has a population of 2.1 crore (2001), nearly 70 percent of whom speak Haryanvi, which has a separate identity as a second language, with 55 percent Haryanvi literacy, as different from 68 percent claimed for Hindi.

Rajasthan was called as United States of Rajasthan in 1948 period. Now it has a population of 5.64 crore including about 1.6 crore people who speak Marwari, now in the queue to be listed in the 8th schedule. It has its own script. Mewari is another language spoken by 52 lakh people. Bagri is spoken by 20 lakh people. Then there are Mewati, Shekhawati, Hadoti, Dundhari and several other tongues. All these have distinct geographical areas. Braj is spoken in east Rajasthan. If you can call Gondi, Savara, and Koya (distinct tribal) languages as Telugu, we can call these as Hindi. Obviously we cannot. Rajasthani is the lingua franca that is evolving, but with distinct claims by Marwari and the like.

Himachal Pradesh has its own Pahadi group of languages. Kinnauri is a distinct language with its own territory.

What were passed off, wrongly and for long, as Hindi states and Hindi dialects had to be given this new and separate status. They were not Hindi dialects at all, more so in the sense Telugu regional variants are known. In fact Hindi literature hardly began around 19th Century. Whereas written literature of other languages, wrongly

listed as its dialects, began centuries before that (say 1300 onwards), not to speak of oral literatures.

The case of South Indian Languages is Different from Hindi:

They evolved as distinct languages, with different scripts, separate preserved written literatures which are at least 1000 years old. Tamil claims and indeed has greater ancestry. What happened in 1953-56 was not separation, but actually integration and reorganization of states on linguistic basis. Therefore their reorganization on linguistic basis could not be stopped. Andhra *Rashtra* (it has a distinct connotation) was a pioneer in this regard, and soon emerged as AP though people could not, and were not allowed to, genuinely unite as one nationality.

It is ironic that separatists who claim a separate status for Telengana dialect (it is definitely not a distinct language, not even one dialect, but a group of dialects), lump scores of distinct languages as ONE HINDI with several states and base their argument on that. It is a tragedy that scores of Telengana's reputed social scientists, writers, linguists and (so-called?) revolutionaries - not to speak of degenerate politicians - are party to this unscientific outlook, to this opportunism and perfidy.

Evolution of Nationalities and Nations:

It was part of a world-wide process of formation of distinct nations and evolution of emerging nationalities. This process was completed in west Europe before 1900 AD, and began in East Europe after 1900. While most of them evolved into distinct nation states like Germany, France, England, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, some developed into multi-national states like USSR, Yugoslavia and India. Soviet Union and Yugoslavia later broke into nation states by and large. India evolved into a Union of States and still undergoing a churning process.

Now let us see what is the reality of the claim of ONE Hindi and several States.

Bhojpuri: Mother tongue of 15 crore people

They are not small languages either, in the chauvinistic sense (for there is no lesser or smaller mother tongue). For instance, Bhojpuri is spoken by 15 crore people, 8 in Bihar and 7 in UP. It is spoken in contiguous area of western Bihar, adjoining Eastern UP

(Poorvanchal demand is there), and North west Jharkhand (also in south Nepal, Terai). It is not a dialect of Hindi, has many of its own dialects including 4 in east UP. 3.3 crore people got themselves enumerated as Bhojpuri-speaking (recorded as a sub-group of Hindi for technical reasons) in 2001 census: As of now, it is not yet listed in 8th schedule, but people have their own way: they have distinct literature, different world-wide academies.

Bhojpuri had its own Kaithi script, used since at least 16th century until early 20th century; it was written in both Kaithi and Nasta liq (Persian script) for some time, and Kaithi had replaced Persian script in courts and offices 1880s onwards. During those times it was known as the language of Northern Frontier Province language. British India standardized the script, used it in offices and courts. It was the medium of written instruction in primary schools. It continued to be used as such in some districts into 1960s. Devnagari was introduced as late as in 1894.

Babu Ram Smaranlal wrote his stories (1898) in Kaithi. Padmasri Sarda Sinha is the koel of Bhojpuri folk songs, Bhikari Thakur is known as the Shakespeare of Bhojpuri theatre. Rahul Samkriyayan wrote some of his writings in Bhojpuri. Swami Sahajananda Saraswati was a great peasant leader-orator in Bhojpuri. They have their own – not Hindi – newspapers (five), magazines (the Sunday Indian has a Bhojpuri version etc.), TV channels (Mahua, Hamar, etc.), websites and Wikipedia in Bhojpuri and scores of Bhojpuri Cinemas too. Modern Hindi evolved with Bhojpuri as one of its bases. And we deemed it as a dialect of Hindi, i.e. called the mother as the daughter!

Magadhi (Magahi, some say) is another Bihari language spoken by about 2 crore people. Bhojpuri, Magadhi, and Maithili are three major languages of Bihar, after separation of Jharkhand, and they are spoken in distinct geographical zones, with some overlap in course of modern development.

Maithili, listed in the 8th schedule

Linked to ancient Mithila where Sita that is Maithili was supposedly born. It is spoken (in Bihar etc) by some 4.5 crore people, though officially only 1.22 crore people (not a small number) were listed in the census (2001). It is the enumerating staff who enter the data and illiterates do not and cannot insist otherwise, it should be noted. It has two major variants, the north Bihari and the Angika

in east Bihar and adjoining Jharkhand areas. And it is listed in the 8th schedule as a distinct language, by popular demand, in 2003. It has distinct script(s): Mithilakshar, relegated by Hindi that is promoted by the govts., and is sought to be preserved. Tirhuta and Kaithi are its other scripts. (There are some languages with more than one script, like Konkani written in Kannada, Marathi and Devnagiri) With a modern grammar prepared by George Abraham Grierson, it is used in official correspondence too. Sahitya Academy gives prizes for Mathili works separately from Hindi. It has rich and old literary tradition dating back to Varna Ratnakaram (1224 AD) by Jyothiswar Thakur. Vidyapati was its most popular poet (known as soul of Mithila) and even today no celebration goes without his songs. There is a Vidyapati Samaroh every year. (His Bengali works are also famous. There were kingdoms including today's Bihar and W.Bengal, Bihar was separated from Bengal in 1911-12 period, amidst demands for linguistic provinces. Lord Hardinge wrote to the Secretary of State of India: "We are satisfied that it is in the highest degree desirable to give the Hindi-speaking people now included within the province of Bengal, a separate administration." He got a positive reply dated 1911 November 1 and thus Bihar was perhaps the first linguistic province formed, though the British had their own strategies. (Cited by KV Narayana Rao, P.30-31, in *The Emergence of AP*, 1973). In fact, it is said, it was Vidyapati (1350-1450 period) who got it an official status, replacing Sanskrit, by Raja of Darbhanga (there is a constituency by that name in Bihar today).

Besides the above two, in UP Avadhi is spoken by about 2 crore people, Kanauji by around one crore people. Geographically, far east UP has Bhojpuri, and west of it is Awadhi, then Kanauj in central UP, and far western UP has Braj Bhasha. Braj and Awadhi were the original literary languages of this part of North India, which were precursors for modern Hindi, like Bhojpuri and Mathili mentioned earlier. Hindi in fact developed as a lingua franca with official patronage, including Urdu dialects also. Bhakti poetry of Tulsidas, Surdas, Gurudas, Amir Khusro's sufi poetry were all written in these languages, not Hindi as we know it now. There is Brajbhoomi demand (we know it as the land of Kamsa, Krishna's uncle) covering far west UP, east Rajasthan (Bharatpur and Dhaulpur), and South Haryana (Faridabad, Gurgaon), Delhi-Muthura road, all a contiguous region. Mayawati's BSP supports it as also Bundelkhand. Southern UP (Jhansi to Banda zone), and

adjoining districts of MP speak Bundeli, with Bundelkhand as a demand and we lump them all as Hindi! (Subsequently UP Assembly passed a resolution recommending division into four states.)

Uttarakhand, a state with its own languages

We often hear arguments if three Hindi states could be divided into six, why not break up AP too. Take Uttarakhand, separated from UP. Out of its 85 lakh population (2001), 40 lakh speak Garhwali, mostly in west of the state, and 24 lakh (1998 data) spoke Kumaoni, in eastern parts of the state. The rest speak several allied languages linguists classify under Pahadi group of languages. In fact, they are distinct languages. For instance, Kumaoni has its own script, and it is officially taken as a second language with 58 percent literacy rate. They are not Hindi dialects.

Chattisgarh is an official language and has 8 dialects of its own!

Chattisgarh carved out of MP in 2000 AD has its own official language, different from MP. Chhattisgarhi Language is a rich Indo-Aryan language and is spoken in almost all the parts of Chattisgarh. Out of its more than 2 crore population, Chattisgarhi is spoken by 1.15 crore people, as per dated statistics. It is regarded as an official language along with Hindi. Linguists treat it as a distinct language, and not as a dialect, and it has 8 dialects of its own! The rest speak several tribal and other languages (some are a part of Dravidian family, nearer to Telugu, some borrow from Munda), adding up to 90 dialects. The state has a rich tradition of folk songs and folk theatre. Habib Tanvir (Charandas Chor) restored its pride of place.

Jharkhand, a land of tribal languages and adivasi struggles

Jharkhand literally means the land of jungles and bushes and was carved out of Bihar in 2000 AD as a predominantly tribal state (28 percent STs, and 12 percent SCs) with 32 ST groups. It has a history of tribal rulers since 1200 AD, Santhali and Munda tribal rajas being noted among them. It was known as, Jharkhand since 1765 when British East India company came to control it. 70 percent of its 2.7 crore population speak Jharkhandi group of tribal languages, Santhali, Mundari, Ho, and some speak the Dravidian tribal languages which include Oraon ((Kurukh), and Korwa. They have

distinct geographical spread. Santhali has a modern Olchiki script, now in use. Likewise Warangchiti Script is used by Ho. Tolongsiki Script is developed for Kurux (Oraon) language though not much in use. 10 percent speak Bengali, in areas adjoining Bengal.

Adivasi Struggles

The period of revolts of the Adivasis to protect their Jharkhand land took place from 1771 to 1900 CE. The first ever revolt against the landlords and the British Government was led by Tilka Manjhi, a valiant Santhal leader in Santhal tribal belt in 1771. This was followed by many tribal revolts like by the Oraons, the Mundas, Hos, etc. The Kol Risings of 1832 was the first biggest tribal revolt that greatly upset the British administration in Jharkhand. It was caused by an attempt of the Zamindars to oust the tribal peasants from their hereditary possessions. The Santhal insurrection broke out in 1855 under the leadership of two brothers Sidhu and Kanhu. Then Birsa Munda revolt broke out in 1895 and lasted till 1900. The revolt though mainly concentrated in the Munda belt, pulled its supporters from Oraon belt of Lohardaga, Sisai and even far way. It was the longest and the greatest tribal revolt in Jharkhand. It was also the last tribal revolt in Jharkhand. All of these uprisings were quelled by the British through massive deployment of troops across the region. The 20th century Jharkhand movement may also be seen as moderate movement as compared to the bloody revolts of the 19th century.

How can Jharkhand, a land of tribal languages (70 percent population speak them, 10 percent speak Bengali) and adivasi struggles be called a Hindi state?

Thus whether Telangana is separated or not, it has no comparison with the states formed in 2000. In fact Justice Srikrishna Committee appointed to study the question clearly said that AP was the first linguistic state formed in India and this would be the FIRST case of division of linguistic states, if so decided, and warned the Indian State of its possible repercussions.

In Section 5 of the 9th Chapter, mentioning the serious issues involved, the Committee said :

“c) The division of the state will also have serious implications outside Andhra Pradesh. It would not only give fillip to other similar demands but it will be for the first time, after the reorganisation of States that a political demand for dividing a linguistically constituted state would have been conceded by the Union Government with the creation of two Telugu speaking states. The issue requires a most calm and dispassionate consideration of the consequences. The matter should also be seen in the larger context of whether a region can be allowed to decide for itself what its political status should be, as that would only create a demand for a great number of small states resulting in problems of coordination and management.”

(Note : Please note that population data is mostly of 2001 Census as the article was written before Census 2011 data was available.)

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OBJECTIVITY IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

“Facts do not organize themselves into concepts and theories just by being looked at; indeed, except within the framework of concepts and theories, there are to scientific facts but only chaos. There is an inescapable a priori element in all scientific work. Questions must be before answers can be given. The questions are all expressions of our interest in the world; they are at bottom valuations. Valuations are thus necessarily involved already at the stage when we observe facts and carry on theoretical analysis, and not only at the stage when we draw political inferences from facts and valuations.”

“The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory, Preface to the English (language) Edition, pp.ix-xvi.