

**MAHARASHTRA AS A LINGUISTIC
PROVINCE**

*Statement submitted
to
the Linguistic Provinces Commission*

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NOTE

The figures quoted in this memorandum have been taken from various books and pamphlets written by various writers on the subject of reconstituting Maharashtra on a linguistic basis. I rely upon the writers for their accuracy. Similarly, the map of Maharashtra attached to this Memorandum need not be taken as accurate or complete. The idea is merely to give a picture of how the Province when reconstituted will look like.

B. R. A.
14-10-48

MAHARASHTRA AS A LINGUISTIC PROVINCE

PART I

THE PROBLEM OF LINGUISTIC PROVINCES

The question of Linguistic Provinces has not only led to a great deal of controversy born out of party prejudices and party interests but it has led to a difference of opinion as to the merits thereof. The points of controversy relate to claims and counter-claims as between contiguous Provinces to territories as well as to the terms of their inclusion. I shall deal with them at a later stage in so far as they relate to the creation of the Maharashtra Province. I shall first take up the question of the merits of the proposal for Linguistic Provinces.

Purposes behind the demand for Linguistic Provinces

2. What is the purpose which lies behind the demand for Linguistic Provinces ? The generality of those who advocate the creation of Linguistic Provinces do so because they believe that the Provinces have different languages and cultures. They should therefore have the fullest scope to develop their languages and their cultures. In other words, the Provinces have all the elements of a distinct nationality and they should be allowed the freedom to grow to their fullest in nationhood.

Difficulties arising out of Linguistic Provinces

3. In discussing the question of creating such Linguistic Provinces it would be very short-sighted to omit from one's consideration the fact that the structure of Government of India of the future is to be cast in a dual form : (a) a Central Government and (b) a number of Provincial Governments inextricably inter-linked and inter-woven in the discharge of their respective Legislative, Executive and Administrative functions. Before one could agree to the creation of Linguistic Provinces, one must, therefore, consider the effects which Linguistic Provinces would have on the working of the Central Government.

4. Among the many effects that may be envisaged, the following are obvious :

- (1) Linguistic Provinces will result in creating as many nations as there are groups with pride in their race, language and literature. The Central Legislature will be a League of Nations and the Central Executive may become a meeting of separate and solidified nations filled with the consciousness of their being separate in culture and therefore in interests. They may develop the mentality of political insubordination, i.e., refusal to obey the majority or of staging walk-outs. The development of such a mentality is not to be altogether discounted. If such a mentality grows it may easily make the working of the Central Government impossible.
- (2) The creation of Linguistic Provinces would be fatal to the maintenance of the necessary administrative relations between the Centre and the Provinces. If each Province adopts its own language as its official language the Central Government will have to correspond in as many official languages as there are Linguistic Provinces. This must be accepted as an impossible task. How great a deadlock Linguistic Provinces will create in the working of the Governmental machine can be better understood by studying the effects of Linguistic Provinces on the Judiciary. In the new set-up, each Province will have a High Court with a series of subordinate courts below it. At the apex of these High Courts will be the Supreme Court with the right to hear appeals against the decisions of the High Courts. On the basis of Linguistic Provinces, Courts of each Province including its High Court will conduct their proceedings in the language of the Province. What is the Supreme Court to do when its jurisdiction is invoked for rectifying a wrong done by the High Court ? The Supreme Court will have to close down. For, if it is to function — every judge of the Supreme Court — I am omitting for the moment the lawyers practising therein — must know the language of every Province — which it is impossible to provide for.

No one can contemplate such a situation with equanimity. It may lead to a break-up of India. Instead of remaining united, India may end in becoming Europe — faced with the prospect of chaos and disorder.

Advantages from Linguistic Provinces

5. While it is true that the proposal of Linguistic Provinces creates a problem which goes to the very root of the matter — inasmuch as it affects the unity of India — there can be no doubt that the reconstruction of Provinces on linguistic basis has certain definite political advantages.

6. The main advantage of the scheme of Linguistic Provinces which appeals to me quite strongly is that Linguistic Provinces would make

democracy work better than it would in mixed Provinces. A Linguistic Province produces what democracy needs, namely, social homogeneity. Now the homogeneity of a people depends upon their having a belief in a common origin, in the possession of a common language and literature, in their pride in a common historic tradition, community of social customs, etc. is a proposition which no student of sociology can dispute. The absence of a social homogeneity in a State creates a dangerous situation especially where such a State is raised on a democratic structure. History shows that democracy cannot work in a State where the population is not homogeneous. In a heterogeneous population divided into groups which are hostile and anti-social towards one another the working of democracy is bound to give rise to cases of discrimination, neglect, partiality, suppression of the interests of one group at the hands of another group which happens to capture political power. The reason why in an heterogeneous society, democracy cannot succeed is because power instead of being used *impartially* and *on merits* and for the benefit of all is used for the aggrandisement of one group and to the detriment of another. On the other hand, a State which is homogeneous in its population can work for the true ends of democracy, for there are no artificial barriers or social antipathies which lead to the misuse of political power.

7. It follows that if democracy is to function properly the subjects of the State must be so distributed as to form a single homogeneous group. The constitution for the Provinces of India which is on the anvil is designed for a democratic form of Government. It follows that each Province must be homogeneous in its population if democracy in the Province is to be successful. This is simply another way of saying that each Province must be a linguistic unit if it is to be fitted to work a democratic constitution. Herein lies the justification for Linguistic Provinces.

Can the creation of Linguistic Provinces be postponed ?

8. Can the solution of this problem be postponed ? In this connection, I would like to place before the Commission the following considerations :

- (i) There is nothing new in the demand for Linguistic Provinces. Six Provinces (1) East Punjab, (2) United Provinces, (3) Bihar, (4) West Bengal, (5) Assam and (6) Orissa already exist as Linguistic Provinces. The Provinces which are clamouring for being reconstituted on linguistic basis are : (1) Bombay, (2) Madras and (3) Central Provinces. When the principle of Linguistic Provinces is accepted in the case of six Provinces, the other Provinces which are asking the same principle to be applied to them, cannot be asked to wait indefinitely:
- (ii) The situation in the Non-Linguistic Provinces has become exasperating if not dangerous and is in no way different from the

situation as it existed in the old Turkish Empire or in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.

- (iii) The demand for Linguistic Provinces is an explosive force of the same character which was responsible for blowing up the old Turkish Empire or Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is better not to allow it to get too hot when it may become difficult to prevent an explosion.
- (iv) So long as the Provinces were not democratic in their constitutions and so long as they did not possess the widest sovereign powers which the new constitution gives them the urgency of Linguistic Provinces was not very great. But with the new constitution, the problem has become very urgent.

The solution of the difficulties

9. If the problem must be dealt with immediately what is to be the solution ? As has already been pointed out, the solution must satisfy two conditions. While accepting the principle of Linguistic Provinces it must provide against the break-up of India's unity. My solution of the problem therefore is that, while accepting the demand for the re-constitution of Provinces on linguistic basis, the constitution should provide that the official language of every Province shall be the same as the official language of the Central Government. It is only on that footing that I am prepared to accept the demand for Linguistic Provinces.

10. I am aware of the fact that my suggestion runs counter to the conception of Linguistic Provinces which is in vogue. It is that the language of the Province shall be its official language. I have no objection to Linguistic Provinces. But I have the strongest objection to the language of the Province being made its official language where it happens to be different from the official language of the Centre. My objection is based on the following considerations :

- (1) The idea of having a Linguistic Province has nothing to do with the question of what should be its official language. By a Linguistic Province, I mean a Province which by the social composition of its population is homogeneous and therefore more suited for the realization of those social ends which a democratic Government must fulfil. In my view, a Linguistic Province has nothing to do with the language of the Province. In the scheme of Linguistic Provinces, language has necessarily to play its part. But its part can be limited to the creation of the Province, i.e., for demarcation of the boundaries of the Province. There is no categorical imperative in the scheme of Linguistic Provinces which compels us to make the language of the Province its official language. Nor is it necessary, for sustaining the cultural unity of the Province, to make the language of the

Province its official language. For, the cultural unity of the Province, which already exists, is capable of being sustained by factors other than language such as common historic tradition, community of social customs, etc. To sustain Provincial cultural unity which already exists it does not require the use of the Provincial language for official purposes. Fortunately for the Provincialists there is no fear of a Maharashtrian not remaining a Maharashtrian because he spoke any other language. So also there is no fear of a Tamilian or an Andhra or a Bengali ceasing to be a Tamilian, Andhra or Bengali if he spoke any other language than his own mother-tongue.

- (2) The out-and-out advocates of Linguistic Provinces would no doubt protest that they have no intention of converting the Provinces into separate nations. Their *bona fides* need not be doubted. At the same time, it often happens that things do take a shape which their authors never intended. It is therefore absolutely necessary to take from the very beginning every step to prevent things taking an evil shape in course of time. There is therefore nothing wrong if the loosening of the ties in one direction is accompanied by their being tightened up in another direction.
- (3) We must not allow the Provincial language to become its official language even if it was natural that the Provincial language should be the official language of the Province. There is no danger in creating Linguistic Provinces. Danger lies in creating Linguistic Provinces with the language of each Province as its official language. The latter would lead to the creation of Provincial nationalities. For the use of the Provincial languages as official languages would lead Provincial cultures to be isolated, crystallized, hardened and solidified. It would be fatal to allow this to happen. To allow this is to allow the Provinces to become independent nations, separate in everything and thus open the road to the ruination of United India. In Linguistic Provinces without the language of the Province being made its official language the Provincial culture would remain fluid with a channel open for give and take. Under no circumstances, we must allow the Linguistic Provinces to make their Provincial languages their official languages.

11. The imposition of an All-India official language on a Linguistic Province which may happen to be different from the language of the Province cannot come in the way of maintaining Provincial culture. Official language will be used only in the field occupied by Government. The non-official field or what may be the purely cultural field will still remain open to the Provincial language to play its part. There may be a healthy competition between the official and non-official language. One may try to

oust the other. If the official language succeeds in ousting the non-official language from the cultural field, nothing like it. If it fails, there cannot be much harm. Such a position cannot be said to be intolerable. It is no more intolerable than the present position in which we have English as the official language and the Provincial language as its non-official language. The only difference is that the official language will not be English but some other.

The requirements of a satisfactory solution

12. I am aware of the fact that my solution is not an ideal solution. It makes working of the constitution in the Provinces on democratic lines possible. But it does not make possible the democratic working of the constitution at the Centre. That is because mere linguistic unity, i.e., the facility to speak a common language does not ensure homogeneity which is the result of many other factors. As stated before, the representatives selected by the Provinces to the Central Legislature will remain what they are, namely, Bengalis, Tamilians, Andhras, Maharashtrians, etc., even though they may be speaking the official language of the Centre and not their mother-tongue. But an ideal solution which can be put into effect immediately, I cannot see. We must be content with the next best. The only thing we must be sure about is that the solution we adopt immediately must satisfy two conditions :

- (i) It must be the very next best to the ideal; and
- (ii) It must be capable of developing itself into the ideal.

Judged in the light of these considerations, I venture to say that the solution which I have suggested satisfies these two conditions.

PART II

WILL MAHARASHTRA BE A VIABLE PROVINCE ?

Tests of Viability

13. Coming to the specific question of Maharashtra Province it is necessary to be satisfied that it will be a viable Province. For being declared a viable Province, a Province must satisfy certain tests. It must be of a certain size, it must have a certain volume of population and a commensurate amount of revenue. A Province must not only be self-supporting — which any Province can be by choosing to live on a lower plane — but it must have sufficient revenue to provide for a minimum standard of administration required by efficiency and the needs of social welfare.

Is Maharashtra Viable ?

14. Does the Province of Maharashtra satisfy these tests ? The following are the figures which show the size and population of the Maharashtra Province as constituted on a linguistic basis :

Territory		Area in square miles	Total population of the territory	Total Marathi-speaking population of the territory	Percentage of Marathi-speaking population to total population
Twelve Districts of the Bombay Presidency	..	47,284	1,29,13,544	1,00,45,100	77.8
Eight Districts of C. P. and Berar	..	36,865	70,20,694	53,88,300	76.7
Total	..	84,151	1,99,34,238	1,54,33,400	77.4
States within Bombay Presidency	..	11,314	27,20,207	21,20,700	77.9
Marathi-speaking Districts of Hyderabad State	..	22,766	42,49,272	32,99,300	77.6
Goa	..	1,534	5,80,000	5,20,000	89.6
State of Bastar	..	13,701	6,33,888	2,12,300	33.5
Total	..	49,315	81,83,367	61,42,300	
Grand Total	..	1,33,466	2,81,17,605	2,15,85,700	76.8

Area and population of Maharashtra

15. The above table gives figures for the Maharashtra Province in its two forms (1) abridged and (2) unabridged. In its unabridged form which means if all the area occupied by the Marathi-speaking people was constituted in one single Province the area and the population of Maharashtra will be 1,33,466 square miles with a population of 2,15,85,700. In its abridged form which means that if the area and population of the Marathi-speaking people comprised within the States was for the moment omitted, even then the proposed Maharashtra Province would comprise an area of 84,151 square miles with a population of 1,54,33,400.

Revenue of Maharashtra

16. Turning to the revenue side of the Province, it has been estimated that the total annual revenue at the existing rate of taxation which will accrue to the abridged Maharashtra Province will be approximately Rs. 25,61,51,000.

Comparison of Maharashtra with other Provinces

17. Some comparisons are necessary to get an idea if a Province of this size, with this population and with so much revenue will be viable. For this, I give below figures of the first or the biggest and the forty-seventh or the smallest states within the U.S.A. in order of their size and population :

States					Area in square miles
1st Texas	..	..	..	..	2,67,339
47th Delaware	..	..	..	..	2,057

States					Population
1st New York	..	..	..	..	1,26,32,890
47th Wyoming	..	..	..	..	2,57,108

18. It is obvious that Maharashtra whether one takes its abridged edition or the unabridged edition of it will be several times bigger than Delaware which is the smallest State in U.S.A. in point of area and also several times bigger than New York which is the biggest state in U.S.A. in point of population.

19. Comparison of Maharashtra with the existing and prospective Linguistic Provinces of India may also be useful. Their position in point of area, population and revenue is as follows :

Province		Area in sq. miles	Population	Annual Revenue
				Rs.
<i>Existing Linguistic Province—</i>				
United Provinces	..	106,247	5,50,20,617	32,65,08,000
Bihar	..	69,745	3,63,40,151	16,26,78,000
Orissa	..	32,198	82,28,544	4,60,62,000
<i>New Linguistic Provinces—</i>				
Andhra	..	70,000	1,90,00,000	
Karnatak	..	25,000	45,00,000	
Kerala	..	6,000	35,00,000	

These figures when compared with the figures for Maharashtra leave no doubt that Maharashtra will not merely be a viable Province but a strong Province in point of area, population and revenue.

PART III

SHOULD THE MAHARASHTRA PROVINCE BE FEDERAL OR UNITARY ?

20. I will now turn to what are known to be points on which there is controversy. There is no controversy regarding the unification of Maharashtra into one Province. The controversy relates to the way it should be brought about. One view is that the new Maharashtra Province should be a unitary Province, with a single legislature and a single executive. The other view is that Maharashtra should be a Federation of two sub-Provinces, one sub-Province to consist of the Marathi-speaking districts of the Bombay Presidency and the other of the Marathi-speaking districts of the present Province of the Central Provinces and Berar. The idea of creating sub-Provinces has originated from the spokesmen of the Marathi-speaking districts of Central Provinces and Berar. I am satisfied that it is only the wish of a few high-caste politicians who feel that in a unified Maharashtra their political careers will come to an end. It has no backing from the people of Central Provinces and Berar. I would not have referred to this point but for the fact that it gives me an opportunity to enunciate what I regard as a very vital principal. When it is decided to create a Linguistic Province, I am definitely of opinion that all areas which are contiguous and which speak the same language should be forced to come into it. There should be no room for choice nor for self-determination. Every attempt must be

made to create larger provincial units. Smaller provincial units will be a perpetual burden in normal times and a source of weakness in an emergency. Such a situation must be avoided. That is why I insist that all parts of Maharashtra should be merged together in a single province.

PART IV

MAHARASHTRA AND THE CITY OF BOMBAY

Controversy over Bombay

21. Should the City of Bombay be included in Maharashtra or not is another point over which there has been a controversy. A meeting was held in Bombay in the building of the Indian Merchants Chamber. The meeting was attended by no more than sixty. With the exception of one Indian-Christian it was attended by only Gujarathi-speaking merchants and industrialists. Although it was small and sectional meeting, its proceedings were flashed on the front page of every important newspaper in India and the *Times of India* was so impressed by its importance that it wrote an editorial which while mildly castigating the vituperative tone which the speakers at the meeting adopted against the Maharashtrians, supported the resolutions passed at the meeting regarding the future of Bombay. This proves what truth there is in the reply given by Lord Birkenhead to the Irish Leader, Mr. Redmond, in the course of the Irish controversy when he said that there are cases where a minority is a majority.

My memorandum would be woefully incomplete if I omitted to deal with the *pros* and *cons* of this controversy. This is because of two reasons : In the first place, the meeting has been recognized to be very important and secondly because the resolutions of the meeting have been supported by eminent University Professors.

Proposals regarding Bombay

22. The meeting passed the following resolutions :

- (1) That the question of the creation of Linguistic Provinces should be postponed ; or
- (2) That if it is not postponed, Bombay City should be constituted into a separate Province.

There is a third suggestion, namely, that Konkan should be constituted into a separate Province with Bombay as its capital. There is hardly any support to this plan. There is therefore no necessity to discuss it.

Decision regarding Bombay must be made now

23. I have no complaint against that part of the Resolution which says the question of Linguistic Provinces be postponed provided the main question namely whether Bombay should or should not be included in Maharashtra is settled. If this question was settled it did not matter if it

took five or ten years to give effect to the Settlement. But the resolution is only an escapism. It does not settle the issue. It only adjourns the controversy. The main question must therefore be tackled right now.

Ground for the exclusion of Bombay from Maharashtra

24. The arguments urged in favour of separating Bombay from Maharashtra are set out below :

- (1) Bombay was never a part of Maharashtra.¹
- (2) Bombay was never a part of the Maratha Empire.²
- (3) The Marathi-speaking people do not form a majority of the population of the City of Bombay.³
- (4) Gujarathis have been old residents of Bombay.⁴
- (5) Bombay is a trade centre for vast areas outside Maharashtra. Therefore, Bombay cannot be claimed by Maharashtra. It belongs to the whole of India.⁵
- (6) It is the Gujarathi-speaking people of Bombay who have built up the trade and industry of Bombay. The Maharashtrians have been only clerks and coolies. It would be wrong to place the owners of trade and industry under the political dominance of the working classes who form the bulk of Maharashtrians.⁶
- (7) Maharashtra wants Bombay to be included in Maharashtra because it wants to live on the surplus of Bombay.⁷
- (8) A multi-lingual State is better. It is not so fatal to the liberty of smaller people.⁸
- (9) Regrouping of Provinces should be on rational lines and not on national lines.⁹

Burden of Proof

25. On an examination of these points it is obvious that points (1) and (2) are preliminary in the sense that they help us to decide on whom rests the burden of proof. If it is proved that Bombay is part of Maharashtra, then the burden of proof for separating it from Maharashtra must fall upon those who urge that it should be separated and not upon those who claim that it should remain part of Maharashtra. I will therefore deal with these two points first.

1. Prof. Gheewala—*Free Press Journal*, September 6, 1948, and Prof. Moraes—*Free Press Journal*, September 18, 1948.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Prof. C. N. Vakil, *Free Press Journal*, September 21, 1948.

4. Prof. Gheewala, *Free Press Journal*, September 6, 1948.

5. Prof. C. N. Vakil, *Free Press Journal*, September 11, 1948.

6. Prof. C. N. Vakil, *Bombay Chronicle*.

7. Prof. C. N. Vakil, at the meeting of India Merchants Chamber.

8. Prof. Dantwala, *Free Press Journal*, September 1, 1948.

9. Prof. Gheewala, *Free Press Journal*, September 11, 1948.

POINTS (1) AND (2)

Verdict of History

26. These points can be considered both in the light of history as well as of geography. I am, however, convinced that history cannot help us to decide the issue. In the first place, how far back must we go to find the data on which to base our conclusion. It is obvious that the history of the ancient past would be of no use to us in this connection. What could be of use to us is the past of the present. One may go further and question any reliance being placed upon such a past of the present for drawing any conclusion that can have a bearing on the issue before us. Most of the contacts between people during historical times have been between conquerors and conquered. This is true of India as well as of Europe. But the results of such contacts have been quite different in Europe and in India. In Europe such contacts have produced assimilation of the conflicting social elements. Frequent inter-marriages have confounded the original stocks. One language, either the most useful or the most commonly spoken, has tended to supplant the other. If one civilization is superior to the others in the same country it has automatically supplanted them. This natural tendency towards assimilation which we see in Europe is so strong that steps have to be taken to counteract it. What is the tendency in India? It is definitely against assimilation. The Musalmans conquered Hindus. But the Musalmans remained Musalmans and the Hindus remained Hindus. The Gujarathis were conquered by Maharashtrians and were ruled by them for some years. What effect has it produced upon the Gujarathis? Nothing. Gujarathis have remained Gujarathis and Maharashtrians have remained Maharashtrians. The Chalukyas conquered Maharashtrians and so did the Shilahars. But there was no assimilation between them. The Shilahars and Chalukyas remained what they were and so did the Maharashtrians. This being the case, what help can Indian History give in the decision of the issue? The history of internal upheavals as well as of external aggressions has been nothing more than a passing show. Conquest means nothing and proves nothing.

Verdict of Geography

27. Let us now turn to geography and ask for its verdict. It seems to be a better witness than history. For this purpose one must consider the location of Bombay in relation to the Province of Maharashtra. The Province of Maharashtra once it is created will be triangular in shape. One side of this triangle is formed by the Western Coast Line of India between Daman in the North and Karwar in the South. The City of Bombay lies in between Daman and Karwar. The Province of Gujarat starts from Daman and spreads northwards. The Kanada Province starts from Karwar and spreads southwards. It is about 85 miles South of Daman which is the starting point of Gujarat, and 250 miles North of Karwar, which is the starting point of

Karnatak Province. If the unbroken territory between Daman and Karwar is geographically part of Maharashtra, how could Bombay be held not to be a part of Maharashtra ? This is an incontrovertible fact of nature. Geography has made Bombay part of Maharashtra. Let those who want to challenge the fact of nature do so. To an unbiassed mind it is conclusive proof that Bombay belongs to Maharashtra.

Bombay and the Maratha Empire

28. That the Marathas did not care to make it a part of their Empire does in no way affect the validity of the conclusion drawn from geography. That the Marathas did not care to conquer it does not prove that Bombay is not a part of Maharashtra. It only means that the Maratha power was a land power and did not therefore care to spend its energy in the conquest of a seaport.

29. With the decision on Points (1) and (2), the burden must now shift on those who contended that Bombay should not be included in Maharashtra. Have they discharged the burden ? This leads to the consideration of other points.

POINT (3)

Marathi-speaking population—majority or minority

30. There is no unanimity on this question. Prof. Gadgil speaking for the inclusion of Bombay in Maharashtra asserts that the Marathi-speaking population of Bombay according to the census of 1941 is 51 per cent. Speaking against the inclusion of Bombay, Prof. Gheewala says that the Marathi-speaking population of Bombay is 41 per cent. Prof. Vakil has brought it down to 39 per cent, which he regards as a very liberal estimate. I have not had time to check up these figures and I understand that the Census of Bombay does not render much help in arriving at a precise figure. However, if one reads the reasons assigned by Prof. Vakil, one would find his conclusion to be speculative if not wishful thinking. But assuming that the figures given by Prof. Vakil are correct, what of it ? What conclusion can be drawn from it ? Does it defeat the claim of Maharashtra to include Bombay ? Ever since the British became the masters of India, India has been one country with a right to free movement from place to place. If people from all parts of India were allowed to come to Bombay and settle there, why should the Maharashtrians suffer ? It is not their fault. The present state of the population cannot therefore be a ground for excluding Bombay from Maharashtra.

POINT (4)

Are Gujarathis Natives of Bombay ?

31. Let us however fully consider the question. Are the Gujarathis natives of Bombay ? If they are not, how did they come to Bombay ? What