

SRC & the map of 1958

Between the 1956 and the 1958 editions of the maps published by Survey of India , the only noticeable change is the incorporation of the metric system , in addition to miles , which had hitherto been the measure of the land . The metric system in weights and measures had been adopted by the Indian Parliament in December 1956, and the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, took effect from October 1958. This is also the time to talk about the Surveyor Generals of India, their designations and affiliations. The 1956 map was published under the direction of Brigadier Gambhir Singh, MIS (IND), and Surveyor General of India. Readers may recall that the first Hindi map of 1952 had also been published under his authority, but back then he was Col Gambhir Singh, and his designation was Acting Surveyor General of India. The Surveyor General who gave us the first map of the Indian Dominion was Brig IHR Wilson, who in addition to being the Surveyor General of India was also an FRICS (Fellow of the Royal Society of Institution of Chartered Surveyors) when the first map of the Dominion of India was published . The motto of FRICS is *Est Modus in Rebus* (there is a measure in all things) Later he also took up the membership of the Institution of Surveyors (India), a professional institution which now conducts courses and accords recognition to professionals engaged in land, hydrography ,cadastral, building , valuation and Mine Surveying, among others. The long term impact of their works is often not fully appreciated, and therefore I thought it is important to acknowledge their work through this column!

Before we discuss the recommendations of SRC which did not find a place on this map, we should look at the state of Mysore, which now had all the Kannada speaking areas from Bombay, Madras and Andhra besides the Coorg state. In other words, all the recommendations with regard to Karnataka were accepted, except for the name. Thus Mysore was one of the last princely states to lose its identity, and it was renamed Karnataka in 1973 after a long wait of seventeen years.

SRC wanted a separate state of Vidarbha, consisting of the Marathi speaking districts of MP, namely Buldana, Akola, Amravati, Yeotmal, Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara and Chanda but it was not accepted, mainly on account of its implications on Bombay and Punjab which had to be retained as a composite bi-lingual states. Thus, even in 1956, the linguistic aspirations of people of all linguistic regions could not be configured onto a map. In fact, this was a case where some aspirations were met, and others were not, and there were violent assertions across many regions, which led to the next major phase of reorganization in 1960!

It must also be mentioned that the SRC had wanted the retention of the Telugu speaking districts into a residuary state of Hyderabad till the General elections of 1961, and then if by a two thirds majority, the Legislature of Hyderabad state expressed itself in favour of merger with the Andhra state, a united Andhra could be made. We may note here that the SRC was comfortable with the organization of a linguistic community into two states (Andhra and Hyderabad) as also with a Marathi speaking state of Vidarbha, and a bilingual (Gujarati – Marathi) state of Bombay.

With regard to the state of Assam, the commission held the view that the creation of a Hill state was impracticable, and there 'is also no reason, having regard to the peculiar features and circumstances of

Assam, why a separate Hill state should be created'. On the contrary, they suggested the merger of Tripura with Assam forthwith, and that of Manipur at a later stage. They also recommended that the arrangements with regard to North eastern Frontier Agency should be retained. As we shall see later, within the next few years it, the recommendations with regard to Assam were completely reversed on account of the insistence of the Assam legislature to impose Assamese as the language of administration in the entire territory.

The SRC had also suggested that the predominantly Malayalam speaking areas of Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands under the Malabar district under Madras be brought under the Kerala. However, while Malabar was made part of Kerala, the islands were organized into a separate union territory for administrative purposes. This was on the pattern of the administration for the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and both island territories came directly under the Union government. The new territory was called Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands before the adoption of the name Lakshadweep which in Malayalam and Sanskrit means 'a thousand islands' on November 1, 1973. Incidentally the Hindi maps, right from 1952 had always referred to these islands as Lakshadweep!