

Belagavi border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka

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In news- Border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka reared its head again in the Belagavi region of Karnataka.

A brief note on the border dispute-

- The dispute dates back to the period of Independence and the reorganization of states on linguistic lines in 1956.
- At the time of Independence, the **region of Belagavi (the Belgaum) was part of the Bombay presidency.**
- The erstwhile Bombay Presidency, a multilingual province, included the present-day Karnataka districts of Vijayapura, Belagavi, Dharwad and Uttara-Kannada.
- **The region was, however, integrated with the state of Mysore (now Karnataka)** during reorganisation of states on linguistic lines.



- The States Reorganisation Act of 1956, which divided states on linguistic and administrative lines, made Belgaum and 10 talukas of Bombay State a part of the then Mysore State (which was renamed Karnataka in 1973)

- While demarcating borders, the Reorganisation of States Commission sought to include talukas with a Kannada-speaking population of more than 50 per cent in Mysore.
- The essential claim of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti(MES) and pro-Marathi groups is that Belagavi is a largely Marathi-speaking region and it should be a part of Maharashtra instead of Karnataka which is a Kannada-speaking state.
- The MES and other groups claim that nearly 45 percent of the district is Marathi speaking while pro-Kannada groups argue that the Marathi population is only around 35 per cent which is on par with the Kannada-speaking population of the region.
- The MES came into existence in 1948 with the sole aim of pushing for integration of Belgaum with Maharashtra during the reorganization of states.



- The Government of India constituted the **Mahajan Commission under former Chief Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan on 25 October 1966.**
- The Commission, which submitted its report in August 1967, **recommended that 264 villages be transferred to Maharashtra (which formed in 1960) and that Belgaum and 247 villages remain with Karnataka.**
- **Maharashtra rejected the report, calling it biased and**

illogical, and demanded another review.

- **Karnataka welcomed the report**, and has ever since continued to press for implementation, although this has not been formally done by the Centre.
- Maharashtra continues to claim over 814 villages along the border, as well as Belgaum city, which are currently part of Karnataka.
- In 2004, the Maharashtra government moved the Supreme Court for a settlement of the border dispute under Article 131(b) of the Constitution, demanding 814 villages from Karnataka on the basis of the theory of village being the unit of calculation, contiguity and enumerating linguistic population in each village.