

Critical analysis on re-delineating a region's boundaries:

The case of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract - The change in political boundaries and bifurcation of states with the re-delineation of districts changes the entire political structure and is responsible for the growth road map for newly delineated regions. The same with Andhra Pradesh, after its bifurcation from Telangana in 2014, had lost its capital and primate city to Telangana, i.e., Hyderabad. With leftover thirteen districts, now twenty-six, numerous bills and decisions were passed to decide capital city(s) as Amravati to be in focus. However, Amravati being a proposed Greenfield city to be developed, the existing potential of other cities spoke about Vishakhapatnam possessing the character of Primate City and thus may be the Capital too.

Key Words: Megacity of Andhra Pradesh, Primate City of Andhra Pradesh, Capital of Andhra Pradesh, Bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, New Greenfield City, Three Capitals of Andhra Pradesh

1. INTRODUCTION

The Andhra Pradesh state had 23 districts that were regionally organized into three primary areas until breakup took place in 2014. The three major regions that make up all of Andhra Pradesh are the Coastal Region (9 districts with a coastal boundary), Telangana Region (10 districts with Telugu speakers), and Rayalaseema Region (4 districts).

Potti Sreeramulu (GEORGE, 2014), a freedom fighter, demanded that Telangana be made into a separate state due to ethnolinguistic, educational, and developmental differences from the rest of Andhra, which led to the emergence of the Telangana Movement in 1969. The rest of Andhra historically belonged to the Madras Presidency.

After 60 years of togetherness, Srikrishna Committee (2010) proposed six solutions (GEORGE, 2014) to this revolt, primarily not to divide the state and give political empowerment to the Telangana region by creating a statutorily empowered Telangana Regional Council. The second best solution was to carve out the Telangana Region from Andhra Pradesh.

Finally, on June 02, 2014 state got split into two different states.

2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and Hyderabad becoming the Capital of the Telangana Region, with no such city left for Andhra Pradesh, has left a big question as to which

city to be declared as the capital city for new Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, the objective of this study is to critically analyze the administrative decisions taken on re-delineation of boundaries of Andhra Pradesh and its districts multiple times and based upon those effects; finding out the expected regional primate city for new Andhra Pradesh as its consequence in terms of its potential, and its result to think it as New Capital too.

3. THE BIFURCATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Before the partition, the Andhra Pradesh state region comprised mainly three areas based on socio-cultural characteristics, i.e., Coastal Region, Telangana Region, and Rayalaseema Region. After the Telangana Revolt, Seemandhra (GEORGE, 2014) is used as the collective term for Coastal and Rayalaseema (MapsofIndia.com, 2022) region (presently new Andhra Pradesh), excluding the Telangana region (currently new Telangana State) to be a separate entity all alone.



Map 1 Regions of Andhra Pradesh

Source - <https://www.clearias.com/telangana-andhra-pradesh/>

3.1. Formation of two States-two Capitals

A Bill was passed in parliament called Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014, which defined the states' boundaries and bifurcated them. Telangana State got Hyderabad as the permanent Capital and residuary Andhra Pradesh also got Hyderabad as Capital, but temporarily for only ten years. Later, on April 23, 2015, the newly elected Andhra Pradesh Government (2014 elections) declared Amravati as the new Capital of the new Andhra Pradesh.



Map 2 Bifurcated Andhra Pradesh

Source - <https://ujwalandhra.wordpress.com/2015/09/03/common-problems-staring-at-karnataka-and-andhra-rayalaseema/>

Amravati was thought to be developed as a state of the class megacity, present in Guntur District (in coastal Andhra) by acquiring 33,000 acres of land from farmers by Land pooling. Heavy criticism was raised for the unnecessary develop Amravati (The Economic Times, 2017) and spending of 1,00,000 crore rupees, despite having Vishakhapatnam as well established megacity with lots of Infrastructure and scope for further development.

Furthermore, protests were also raised in the Rayalaseema region of not having any influence and contribution towards making Capital.

3.2. The Three-Capital Theory

Soon after five years, elections were conducted again, the Telugu Desam Party, in which Chandrababu Naidu was appointed as Chief Minister, lost their seats, and YSR Congress Party won the elections. The Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy became the new chief minister of the Andhra Pradesh state in 2019. The new Chief Minister appointed two committees (G. N. Rao Committee and Boston Consulting Group Committee) to decide on the new Capital for the state. Both the Committees proposed decentralized (Sharma, 2020) development and the 'three-capital theory.'

The three capital theory (JHA, 2020) states that Vishakhapatnam should be the Executive Capital, the newly developing Amravati as Legislative Capital, and the Kurnool of Rayalaseema region should be as Judicial Capital for the state. High Power Committee accepted the same, and a Bill was passed on January 20, 2020, named Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020. The Bill got assent from Governor on July 31, 2020, and became an Act.

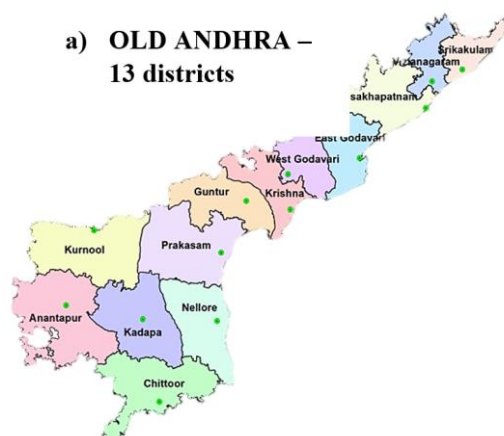
3.3. Again 'One Capital only'

After that, several criticisms from opposition parties and as well as from farmers who had land pooled their land in Amravati for better returns; the YSR Government, on November 22, 2021, paused (Business Standard, 2021) the 'three capital decision' and declared 'Amravati' as the only (Pandey, 2021) Capital as of now.

4. THE GERRYMANDERING OF ANDHRA PRADESH DISTRICTS

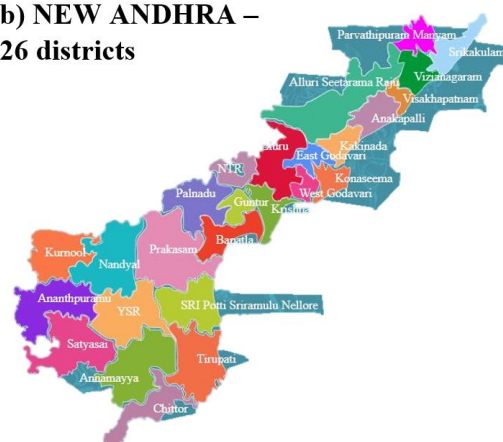
A notification in January 2022 by the YSR Government to re-delineate the boundaries of the 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh and convert them into 26 smaller districts (Seal, 2022) for better Governance. On April 4, 2022, this was announced officially, along with the launch of district portals and handbooks for a better understanding of the new 26 districts. This situation is thoughtful when Amravati is on hold as the only Capital (The Economic Times, 2022) that is too temporary while gerrymandering created 26 districts. Now which one can be the final Capital or effect of development causes which district to be the expected primate city for new Andhra Pradesh.

a) OLD ANDHRA – 13 districts



Map 3 a) Old Andhra Pradesh- 13 Districts

b) NEW ANDHRA – 26 districts



Source- a) <https://apsvc.ap.gov.in/contactus>,

b) <https://www.ap.gov.in/#/>

To find out the primate city, various potentials (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2022) of districts are being analysed based on specific parameters of primate city.

5. PARAMETERS OF PRIMACY

The parameters of the primate city are being selected to analyze the potentials of various districts and their potential (indiaGrowing, 2022) contribution towards the developing Andhra Pradesh in terms of Infrastructure, social and Financial foundations. The respective parameters are as follows:-

- Population Density (Census of India , 2011)
- Connectivity
- Import-Export Trade opportunity
- Tertiary Sector growth
- The Credit-Deposit ratio of Banks
- Employment Registrations and live Register (Planning Department Governemnt of Andhra Pradesh, 2020-21)
- Industrial Land Allotments (MSME-Development Institute, 2015)
- Demand to make as 'Capital (Krishna, 2020).'
- Already well-established Infrastructure

Note :- The Geographical area and population (IndiaCensus.net, 2022) of various districts have not been taken in parameters because instead of Urban Agglomeration , the new Andhra Pradesh have faced Urban De-Agglomeration through gerrymandering of districts.

The judgment criteria for the primate city would be basis on Higher population density, better financial outcome from city, more trade and commerce opportunities as well as Number of industries present in that city. The Connectivity through upcoming Highways and Expressways would be the key linkages for better economic activity and growth potential of town , hence resulting into primate city. Therefore, it has also been taken as key element. The growth of Tertiary sector also demarcates primate towns from others as they are also representers of the scale of development that has happened in town, resulting in its primacy. Moreover the employment registrations statistics reveals much about dependency of other towns on the Employer town or the primate town.

6. IDENTIFYING EXPECTED PRIMATE CITY

From the respective comparison among districts and their potentials (Planning Department Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2020-21), it is clear that Vishakhapatnam has the immense potential to be titled a 'Primate city' for Andhra Pradesh state, holding the character of regional primacy among newly re-delineated twenty-six districts of the state. Vishakhapatnam has the highest population density (Planning Department Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2020-21) among

all districts and even C-D ratio is on higher side. The connectivity will get enhanced with industrial corridor, a part of Golden Quadrilateral. The Sea-port and Air-port are already existed. Tertiary sector is already on progress side. Even Employment registrations and Industrial land allocations are Highest (Planning Department Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2020-21) in Vishakhapatnam. There was also a social drive which urged Vishakhapatnam to be the Capital for Andhra Pradesh.

The second most primate city would probably be Chittoor (Planning Department Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2020-21). Vishakhapatnam followed by Chittoor presenting lots of potential in terms of Investments, Industrial land allotments, C-D Ratio, population density, Tertiary sector growth , Regional connectivity, Physical Infrastructure, Transport Infrastructure, etc. and demand by the people to make it as Capital (for Vishakhapatnam).

7. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Despite being Amravati in the developing stage, it could still be treated as Greenfield city. As already a lot of investments has been done to develop Amravati , plus farmers are also expecting great returns from their land-pooled lands. This would benefit both Government and Farmers and keeps their scope interest otherwise it would led to protests. Ultimately farmers must not be victim of any administrative or planning decisions.

The issue of many capitals would undoubtedly lengthen communication and coherence between the capitals unnecessarily, as well as increase physical distances between them. Additionally, it would accelerate the creation of solid physical connections between the capitals and would need a significant amount of public expenditure. The government would then be compelled to make a large infrastructure investment, which would lead to an increase in land purchases. As in the case of Andhra Pradesh, multiple capitals will increase government costs and require significantly more financial and human resources to manage. The state's purse is very overstretched, which could prevent or delay the implementation of citizen-beneficial programmes.

Vishakhapatnam should serve as Andhra Pradesh's sole capital because it has potential and is unquestionably the state's capital. From the port to the airport, this city's infrastructure is already well-established. It only required a few upgrades, and the state would save a significant amount of money. Vishakhapatnam's regional development must be the long-term strategy for the city's improved growth, infrastructure distribution, and land availability, as well as other needs for a capital city. This would greatly boost the amount of investments, encourage the formation of a primate city, and strengthen its position as the state's regional leader.

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