

Approaching a Decade after the Dissolution of United Andhra Pradesh
(Conference held by Institute For Research on Andhra Pradesh (IRAP))
Seminar Dates: 12 -13 August 2023; Venue: Kurnool. Website: www.irap.org.in

Since the dissolution of United Andhra Pradesh in 2014 both the new Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana states have continued with the prevailing economic model of growth and distribution - neoliberal growth model. Focusing on AP, the policies of privatization, land dispossession, and market-orientation have continued through the two regimes under TDP and YSRCP since 2014.

In tune with the neoliberal policies of the previous regime (TDP), the current government also facilitated selling of ports, airports and SEZs to private players (e.g., Gangavaram and Krishnapatnam to Adani; Special Economic Zone (APSEZ), Kakinada SEZ to Aurobindo, Bhogapuram airport to GMR). State government along with the central government has been trying to privatise and sell Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Similarly, state government is handing over public sector electricity generating companies to private corporate firms. Sectors like education have been further privatized (e.g., increased presence of Byju's). Government has opened new pathways to private capital, monetising public assets, taking over assigned lands in the name of providing housing to the homeless, and for smart townships. It took over assigned lands in several districts in order to, ostensibly, provide house sites to the poor. However, this has raised the question of whether these transfers of assigned lands held by the Dalits are actually meant to facilitate land acquisition by capitalist classes and dominant caste groups? While state government talks about decentralisation, its policies are quite contrary to it. Grama/ward *sachivalayams* are created as parallel bodies by not making them accountable to the local elected bodies, bypassing the existing democratic structures. It seems to have created greater centralization with the power concentrated in the chief minister's office. The most talked about issue in the post-bifurcation period is the one on the capital city for new Andhra Pradesh. How do we make sense of the unresolved issue of three capitals vis-à-vis one mega capital city (Amaravati) issue after almost 10 years of bifurcation? Some of us from IRAP and a few other scholars were able to respond quickly to the idea of Amaravati, the capital city project, which was in the making of a neoliberal city. Subsequently, a proposal to build 'three-capitals' came up, which diffused and took steam out of the high-investment, real estate/speculative and ultimately unrealistic (in terms of needed infrastructure funds) Amaravati capital city. But the alternative is yet to take off in any meaningful way.

In brief, the current YSRCP government has in many ways returned in a formulaic way to the YSR government's (2004-2009) neoliberal-economic populism mix by prioritizing "direct cash transfers" (e.g., Rythu Bharosa, Vidya Deevena, old age pensions, Amma Vodi etc). However, several questions remain unanswered - What is the major economic engine of growth in the state that would accelerate economic output while also providing employment to the people of the state? If such an engine is absent, what is the main set of economic policies that the state has followed? How is the agricultural sector evolving? What are the land, gender and livelihood dynamics in the state? How have different regions in AP fared during this period? How have caste dynamics been unfolding over this period? What is the resolution on the AP capital issue since Amaravati seems to have been abandoned in favour of three capitals? What sort of other urban dynamics (formal-informal sector, land speculation, and employment) have emerged during this period? What was the rationale for, and, effects of decentralisation on the economy and politics of the state? In order to discuss these and other important issues on the eve of the completion of a decade, Institute for Research on Andhra Pradesh (IRAP) is organizing a two-day seminar on AP. The proposed program is as follows:

Seminar Schedule

(Dates: 12 -13 August 2023; Venue: Kurnool)

Day 1 (12 August, 2023)

Introduction to the Seminar (10.15 to 10.30 AM)

Session I: Political Economy of Development (10.30 AM – 12.15 PM).

Chair: Srinivas Chokkakula, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

1. *Economic Growth and Distribution in AP and Telangana since 2014* by Vamsi Vakulabharanam and Sripad Motiram, University of Massachusetts.
2. *Tenant Farmers and Crop Cultivator Rights Act 2019* by Kanneganti Ravi, Rythu Swarajya Vedika
3. *Agro-Processing Chains, Contract Farming and Agricultural Markets* by Purendra Prasad and Chinna Rangaiah, University of Hyderabad

Lunch: 12.15 PM to 1.30 PM

Session II: Land Issues in A.P – Panel Discussion (1.30 to 3.15 PM)

Chair: V. Rajagopal, University of Hyderabad.

4. Overview of Land Issues By Venkateswarlu. Vyavasaya Karmika Sangham
5. *Women's Land Rights and Rural Livelihoods* by Usha Seethalakshmi
6. Land and Adivasi Issues by Ajay Kumar, National Secretary, All India Agricultural & Rural labour Association (AIARLA)

Tea Break: 3:15 – 3.30PM

Session III: Caste, Politics and Development (3.30 to 5.15 PM).

Chair: Mohan Rao, Founder President, Rashtra Cheneta Jana Samakhya.

7. Caste and Politics in Andhra Pradesh by Vinay Kumar Korivi, Dalit Movement Leader.
8. Caste Conflicts in AP: East Godavari as a case in point by Satish C, CSSS, Kolkata
9. Politics of Welfare and Cash Transfer Schemes by Gopal Rao, AP Adhyayana Vedika

Day 2 (13 August, 2023)

Session IV: State, Region and Development (9:30– 11:00 AM).

Chair: Syed Basha

10. South Coastal Andhra Region: Politics of Development by Anji Reddy, Acharya Nagarjuna University
11. Rayalaseema Region: Politics of Development by Dasarath Rami Reddy, Rayalaseema Saguneeti Sadhana Samithi.
12. North Andhra Region: Politics of Development by Raviteja Rambarki, Univ of Hyd.

Tea Break 11-11.15 AM

Section V: Urban Issues - Capital City, Urban Reforms and Informal Sector (11:15–12:45 PM).

Chair: Sripad Motiram, University of Massachusetts

13. Capital City/Cities: Critical Reflections by C.Ramachandraiah (Centre for Economic and Social Studies), Purendra Prasad, University of Hyderabad.
14. Small Towns, Weavers and Development by Mohan Rao, Founder President, Rashtra Cheneta Jana Samakhya.
15. Trade Unions: Workers in the Urban formal and informal Sector by Mr Abdul Gafoor. CITU National Leader.

Lunch Break 12:45 – 2:00 p.m.

Chair: Ramachandraiah/Rama Padma

Session VI: Social Sectors – Education and Health (2:00-3:30 PM).

16. Privatisation of Education Mr Raghava Reddy, Teacher, Prakasham Dist

17. Privatisation of Health Care by Dr Kalesha Saheb, General Surgeon, Nellore

Way Forward and Concluding Remarks: 3:30 – 3:45 p.m.