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viewpoints

Why I support separate Telangana

Contrary to conventional assumptions, bifurcating Andhra Pradesh could benefit both states even if there may be a few losers and some setbacks in the immediate future

I am a recent convert from being neutral to splitting Andhra Pradesh. Many folks from Andhra have spent hours listening to news, reading news, talking to friends and relatives. I have done my research and reached the conclusion that splitting the state will broadly benefit both sides. Yes, there will be losers on both sides, but they will be an insignificant minority.

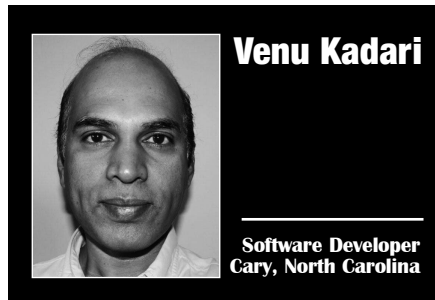
Arguments that I've heard for not splitting the state include: Real estate values in Hyderabad and surrounding areas will plummet, causing widespread losses to folks living in Hyderabad, the strength of Andhra Pradesh will be significantly reduced at the federal level and two governments will create further inefficiency and unnecessary division among people.

Once the federal government declared that the process of creating a separate state has begun, I set out to uncover the implications of this proposed split and came up with my own conclusions.

Real estate: There will be winners and losers in this area. Projected winners are those with real estate in the Andhra region. Projected losers are those with real estate holdings in and around Hyderabad (irrespective of whether they are Andhra or Telangana people). Those who know Andhra politics can easily tell who have significant stakes. Several prominent leaders in Samaikya Andhra (United Andhra) movement have very high stakes. There are many individual investors who have put in significant money into real estate. A decline in Hyderabad real estate prices will cause some paper losses or real losses in the short term. If a Telangana state is not formed, every indication is that the Telangana movement will only intensify, possibly reaching a civil-war stage. That would cause widespread and further significant losses to those holding real estate

in and around Hyderabad.

Pride and respect: There is a total lack of respect for Telangana sentiments and Telangana people. Their culture, language and habits are often ridiculed. If you watch a recording of Harish Rao's passionate speech on the hardships of the Telangana people, a speech he made just before resigning from the Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 2006, you will find some Andhra legislators napping. This split will restore the pride of the Telangana people, who will be huge winners. But those from the Andhra region can also capitalize on this split: There is a whole section within the Andhra region that is handed the same treatment; this is the time to rise.



Venu Kadari

Software Developer
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Balance of power: The benefit to people from the Telangana region is obvious. Like it or not, caste politics are huge in Andhra. If you set out to look at who is controlling the wealth and power today, it is startling. Money and power are in the hands of very, very few people. This is the time for people in the Andhra region to take note of this and overthrow those who keep capturing power through money. The greed of a small section of people has contributed to this situation, and if left unchecked, it is bound to create a similar situation in Andhra. This is the time for Andhra people to loosen the grip of a significant few and spread wealth

and power to a larger population.

Two governments: Some inefficiency will be created because of two governments in place of one, but the benefits will far outweigh the costs. Smaller administrative regions can be administered much better. Forgotten regions like Adilabad and Srikakulam now stand a chance of their problems getting some time in the state Legislature. The problems of the two regions are significantly different, and both require a lot of time and effort. One region has a drought problem while the other suffers from flooding. Time spent on each problem could potentially double. There is also a good chance that other cities within Andhra Pradesh will develop. Most of the cities outside Hyderabad lag significantly in all respects.

Divide among people: As can be seen from recent events, the atmosphere is highly polarized. For instance, Congress Party lawmakers from Telangana are not seen together with lawmakers from Andhra. They have developed a strong distrust for each other. This divide and distrust is spreading to the people. If this issue continues to drag on, it will only worsen. The deeper this divide becomes and the longer it lasts, the longer it will take for normalcy to return. If violence erupts, it could take decades for the region to heal. Both regions will benefit significantly if they operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

Oligarchy: Although we have a democratic form of government, it is not far from an oligarchy. The power and wealth is in the hands of a significant few. This is true irrespective of the region. This is an opportunity for people on both sides to recognize this fact. History has proven time and again that, in the long run, oligarchy is bad for those enjoying its benefits as well.

editor's corner

By Sunil Adam

Man of the year

If Time magazine hadn't gone overboard by putting Barack Obama on the cover page at the slightest provocation (to cash in on his popularity), he would have been a logical shoo-in for Man of the Year. The choice of Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke was patently absurd, considering that Obama dominated the public space, imagination and expectations in the U.S. and many parts of the world. After a year of hero worship, Time seems to have suddenly decided to weigh in on his accomplishments. But to judge Obama on his first year's record is as confounding as deciding to honor him with a Nobel



Peace Prize three weeks after he was sworn in. What Time has not reckoned with is the singular difference that Obama has made in terms of ridding the country of the fear syndrome that the previous administration had deliberately fostered. That's probably why most Americans are sanguine about the escalation of American involvement in Afghanistan, even though a majority of them are opposed to it. They trust Obama to make rational, even if not always agreeable, choices. Restoring that confidence in the presidency should have earned him the mantle of Man of the Year, again.

Kennan & Bull

By Sunil Adam

