

Ordinance on Khammam Villages Deserves to be Scrapped

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The Union Cabinet, on March 2 took up the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 which received the Presidential Assent a day before and proposed changes to it by an ordinance. It was a unique in the history of the Union Cabinet.

The first ordinance item proposed to alter the borders of the Telangana state further by excluding even more mandals and villages of Khammam district. In the Bill that came to the Assembly, the whole of Khammam district was part of Telangana state. However, on February 6, the Union Cabinet, based on a recommendation of the Group of Ministers, suggested that: ‘Bhadrachalam revenue division be merged with AP with 37 villages of Palvancha revenue division and the Bhadrachalam temple town with contiguous area merged with Telangana state to reduce inter-state disputes and enable implementation of the rehabilitation and resettlement of the Polavaram project by the project implementation state i.e., the successor state of Andhra Pradesh.’ The government amendment excluded not just the mandals in Bhadrachalam revenue division but also the mandals of Kukunoor, Velairpadu, Burgampadu, Chintoor in Palvancha division. Here several mischiefs have crept in. Firstly, the reference to project affected persons has been left out. Secondly, the Polavaram project was to be implemented by the Union government not by the successor state of Andhra Pradesh. Thirdly, the number of villages and people affected was not given but only the names of mandals. The Census 2011 gives the details of villages and population mandal-wise which are given in the Table.

The total number of villages in Palvancha division proposed in the amendment is not 37 villages recommended by the GoM but some 197 villages! It also included Chintoor which is the northern most mandal of Khammam well away from the Godavari but with its Sabari/Sileru tributaries. Chintoor has the Lower Sileru hydroelectric project with 450 MW of all-the-year-round generation of the lowest cost power in the state, essential for Telangana.

Clearly the Union Cabinet was misled and approved an amendment which did not correspond to the GoM recommendation. Some highly irregular changes were done by interested elements. This was brought to the attention of the Congress leadership by Jaipal Reddy. Consequently, on Feb 12, the Union Cabinet reversed its position and approved a modified amendment which referred directly to a Government of Andhra Pradesh Order. It now excluded from Telangana only “the revenue villages in the Mandals specified in [G.O.Ms. No. 111 Irrigation & CAD \(LA I V R&RI\)](#) Department, dated the 27th June, 2005 and the revenue villages of Burgampadu, Seetharamanagaram and Kondreka in Burgampadu Mandal.”

The inundation villages now numbered only 134! This was the position the state government had taken in 2005 while submitting details to the Centre and Supreme Court in the Polavaram case. The amended clause was passed by both Houses of Parliament. So from the 236 villages recommended by GoM to the 397 villages approved wrongly by the Cabinet, the figure came down finally to 134 villages which the Lok Sabha approved.

Now, after the Act has come into force, the Union Cabinet without explanation, and without referring the matter to the state Assembly as required under Articles 3 and 4, has decided to issue an ordinance to give away 397 villages! No explanation was given either for the urgency for an ordinance - unless it had to be done before the election notification.

The second ordinance item relates to power. The Bill sent to the state Assembly stated this: "The power of the Central generating stations will be allotted in such ratio to the state of Telangana and the state of Andhra Pradesh based on the actual energy consumption of the last 5 years of the relevant Discoms in the respective successor state. "This clause was passed by both Houses of Parliament. Now the ordinance proposed that instead of 'power' the term 'the unallocated power' be substituted thus reducing the allocation.

It deprives powershortage Telangana of favoured allocation from the Centre. No consultation with the StateEnergy Department took place nor has the need for urgency in this regard established.

These ordinance items illustrate that the Cabinet has showed complete disregard for the Constitution, Parliament, state Assembly and all convention. This despite vigorous protest from Jaipal Reddy.

The ordinances are a blatant attempt at electioneering in Seemandhra at the expense of Telangana. They deserve to be scrapped.

| Revenue Areas | Villages | Population (2011) |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Palvancha Division | | |
| Kukanoor Mandal | 20 | 28392 |
| Velaipadu Mandal | 21 | 22882 |
| Bhurgampadu Mandal | 48 | 64580 |
| Chintoor Mandal | 108 | 40725 |
| Bhadrachalam Division | | |
| Kunarvarman Mandal | 65 | 26245 |
| V. Ramachandrapuram Mandal | 62 | 25597 |
| Bhadrachalam Mandal | 73 | 38961 |
| Total | 397 | 247382 |

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