

# Venkaiah Naidu's Wrong Figures Misled Parliament

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The Andhra Pradesh budget for 201213 was analysed by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). The State's Own Tax Revenues (SOTR) was Rs 59,875 crore of which 43% came from Seemandhra and 57% from Telangana. Another Rs 69,408 crore came from non-tax sources including Central grants. Out of the total revenue of Rs 1,29, 283 crore, only 46% came by way of taxes.

On February 9, Venkaiah Naidu, BJP leader from Seemandhra, released figures of the surplus (+) or deficit (-) for the three regions and the capital -

Coastal Andhra (+Rs 684 crore) , Rayalaseema (-Rs.7600 crore), Telangana's 8 districts ( Rs. 8400 crore) and Hyderabad (+Rs 12, 854 crore). He repeated them in Rajya Sabha on February 20 and gave expenditure figures for Coastal Andhra and Hyderabad (but not for Telangana or Rayalaseema). He claimed that the Seemandhra deficit is Rs 15,000 crore and demanded the Centre make up this deficit. Since his deficit for Seemandhra earlier was only Rs 6,935 crore, he has misled the Parliament.

We have figures of SOTR collected in each region but to allocate the non-SOTR part of total revenues across regions, we used their respective population ratios. These allocations are reasonable and agree in most ways with the revenue, deficit and expenditure figures given by Venkaiah.

From the table it is clear that Seemandhra generated 7% less revenue than its population ratio and spent 3% less resulting in a deficit of Rs 6,935 crore. Telangana revenue was 7% more and its expenditure 3 % more than its population share and produced a surplus of Rs 4,454 crore. To avoid a deficit now Seemandhra state needs to increase its revenues. But Andhra Pradesh's Budget figures for 201213 showed a revenue surplus of Rs 1,128 crore against even Venkaiah Naidu's overall state deficit of Rs 2,481 crore. Venkaiah is therefore plain wrong about overall deficit - by Rs 3,609 crore.

Rs Crores (2012-13)	Seemandhra	Telangana	State
Total Revenues	66020	63263	129283
SOTR	25763	34112	59875
Central Grants etc	40257	29151	69408
Surplus/Deficit	-6935	4454	-2481
Expenditure	72955	58809	131764
Total Revenues %	51%	49%	100%
Expenditure %	55%	45%	100%
Population Ratio %	58%	42%	100%

But Venkaiah Naidu's trick worked. The Union Cabinet, which earlier stated that allocation of Central grants would be by population ratio in Clause 46 (1) of the Bill, later proposed a new Term of Reference for the Finance Commission. The Commission is now also "to take into account resources available to the successor state and make separate awards for each." It is clear from the release of Venkaiah Naidu's figures, that the Seemandhra lobby has been successful at misleading the Cabinet.

Yet the C&AG report shows the falsity of Venkaiah's deficit figures. That is why Venkaiah Naidu was desperately insisting on a figure for compensating Seemandhra's deficit being mentioned in the Bill as his figures will not stand up to close examination by the Finance Commission. Its chairman, the former IAS officer and former governor of RBI, Dr YV Reddy, who comes from Rayalaseema, can be expected to make accurate, reasonable, equitable and fair allocation of Central funds to the successor States. It will not be easy to mislead him.

On the other hand, the Telangana lobby has not been able to shift public debt division from population basis to project and scheme specific allocation. That is, for debts to be allocated to each successor state based on where the money was spent. That is the difference between the two lobbies. While the Seemandhra lobby depends on its money, media, political power, caste connections and clever accounting, the Telangana lobby depends on the ruling powers for getting justice.

In the Lok Sabha, only Asaduddin Owaisi stood up and moved 19 amendments to the Bill that could have saved Telangana - amendments, however, that were voted out by the Congress-BJP combine. He is the only Telangana hero and deserves great appreciation and credit for his efforts. No one else made that effort.

The Seemandhra lobby has tried to paralyse the Telangana state by designing the Bill to effectively delay elections in Telangana by a year. This was corrected after strong protest. But they have succeeded in as much as Hyderabad is to be a quasi UT. There is also to be a common Governor, common High Court, common Public Corporations, common River boards, common Educational quotas and exams. The Telangana state will have very little autonomy for any meaningful action. It is not for nothing that the Seemandhra lobby is considered the second most powerful lobby in the country.

Even after the Bill was approved by Cabinet and presented to the State Assembly, the Seemandhra lobby has managed to get Cabinet move amendments to hand over 397 tribal villages in Bhadrachalam and ensure “deemed consent” for Polavaram project by a yet-to-be-born Telangana state.

However later the Union Cabinet realised the true facts and reduced the transfer to Seemandhra to the 134 villages actually threatened by submergence. Either way, lakhs of poor tribals will end up as major losers due to this Bill.

The content of Bill is also a deceit on Telangana though its ultimate purpose is a Telangana state that was long awaited for which 630 youths committed suicide.

The fight for justice for Telangana will continue for a decade or more. Maybe we need an Amendment to this Act also to rectify the errors will BJP do the job? ***For all this we need intelligent politicians in Telangana who have trained minds and a vision as well as ability.***

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