

Skewed Urban Development in Telangana

Opportunity for Course Correction

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Urban development centered around Hyderabad over the last few decades has eclipsed the growth of other small and medium towns in the Telangana region, leading to “intra-sub-regional disparities”. In the backdrop of the creation of a separate Telangana state carved out of Andhra Pradesh, this article revisits the paper written by the late V L S Prakasa Rao almost 50 years back on the subject.

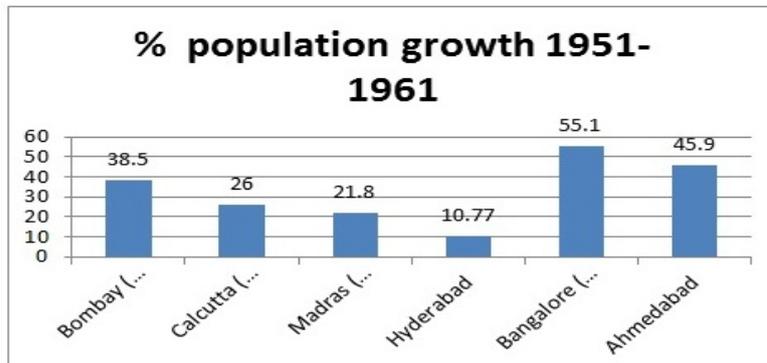
In 1965, V L S Prakasa Rao^[1], an eminent urban geographer, based in Hyderabad, wrote a paper^[2] in which he examined alternate scenarios of urban growth in Telangana. He advocated a hierarchical network of 27 selected towns spread over the region in a “Five-Tier Pattern” as opposed to concentration of growth in metropolitan Hyderabad and a few large centres.

This article is an analysis of the paper written by Prakasa Rao in the context of bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and birth of the new state of Telangana. It chronicles the developments over the last five decades in the field of urban development in the Telangana region, which before June 2014 was a part of the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

The Background

In the last 50 years, Hyderabad has grabbed all attention, and most growth centres identified by Prakasa Rao have recorded little or no growth. As per the 1961 Census, Hyderabad had a population of 12.51 lakhs. Between 1951-1961, the city recorded a low population growth rate of 10.77 %. In the figure below, Hyderabad’s population growth rate has been compared with that of some other large cities in India during the same period.

Figure 1: Population Growth Rate of Selected Cities (1951-1961)



Source: Development Plan for Hyderabad city, Volume I, Work Studies,

Director of Town Planning, Andhra Pradesh.

Hyderabad's slow growth, however, did not continue for long. In the next four decades (1961-2001), Hyderabad emerged as one of the fastest growing metros of India. By 1965, the preparation of the first statutory master plan for the city was underway, and it was finally brought into force in 1975. Under the direction of Prakasa Rao, a "Survey of Regional Patterns and Development of Small and Medium size Towns in Telangana" was carried out and completed by 1964. The survey was sponsored by the Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission. Prakasa Rao's paper presented the summary and conclusions of this survey.

In his paper, Prakasa Rao highlighted that in 1965, Telangana had "17 stagnant and slow growing towns, 2 declining towns and 7 towns growing at a decreasing growth rate". The paper pointed towards a decline of various towns in the region since 1931. He opined that the dominance of Hyderabad and the fact that growth was taking place in only one or two other towns "was contributing to urban disorder if not chaos".

Prakasa Rao advocated a network of small and medium towns in Telangana, interconnected in a hierarchical manner as in a spider's web. Dwelling upon Walter Christaller central-place theory,[\[3\]](#) he sought to establish a mathematical relationship in which every town will have upwards and downward linkages with other towns in the region based on employment, agricultural markets, services and manufacturing among other aspects.

For effective planning and development of Telangana region, Prakasa Rao discussed three alternative patterns of regional urban development for the future network of towns in the region. Firstly, he talked about a Five-Tier Pattern based on the concept of urban hierarchy and central-place theory. Secondly, he put forward a Multiple Urban-Industrial Nuclei Pattern of development. And lastly, he proposed a Metropolitan Pattern, which was centered around the city of Hyderabad.

We shall discuss the three patterns one by one and see how things took shape in the next 50

years.

Five-Tier Pattern

This pattern consisted of the following five “Orders” or hierarchies.

The First Order: Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, was naturally at the top of the hierarchy.

The Second Order: Prakasa Rao made a few striking recommendations and envisaged three “sub-regional centres” of “second order” close to the state capital Hyderabad which belonged to the first order. The three centres envisaged were Warangal, Nizamabad and Vijayapuri, and these were at a distance of approximately 160 km from Hyderabad.

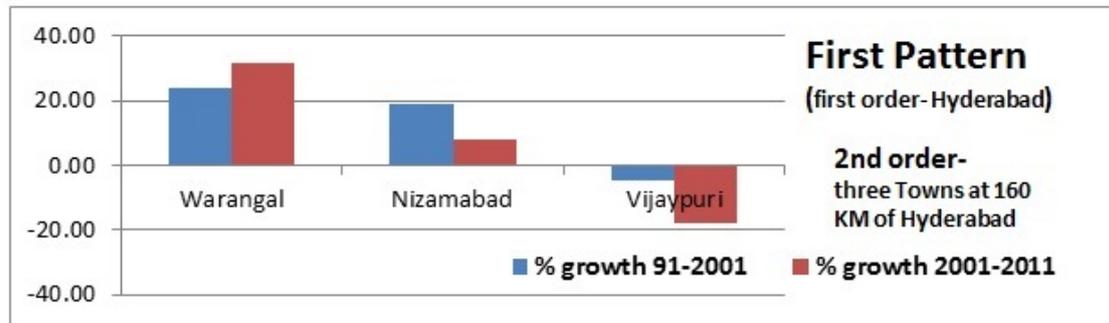
In his paper, Prakasa Rao referred to Vijayapuri as a “boom town” and estimated its future population to range between 100,000-250,000. Vijayapuri, better known as Nagarjunasagar, (Vijayapuri north) is today a small township, located approximately 150 km south of Hyderabad, on the banks of Krishna River. The township was built for the staff working at Nagarjunasagar Dam, the work for which started in 1955. The first phase of the construction of the dam continued till 1967.^[4] According to the 2001 census, the Vijayapuri township had a population of 19,362, which declined to approximately 15,000 in 2011. Obviously, the vision of urban and regional planners, outlined in 1965, was not subscribed to by policy makers and people in subsequent decades.

Town/city	Population 1991	Population 2001	Population 2011	% growth 1991-2001	% growth 2001-2011
Warangal	466,877	577,190	759,594	23.63	31.6
Nizamabad	240,924	286,956	310,467	19.11	8.19
Vijayapuri	20,286	19,333	15,887	-4.7	-17.82

Source : Census of India

Between 2001-2011, the total urban population of Andhra Pradesh state increased by 36.26%.^[5] But the population growth in Nizamabad town almost stagnated, and Warangal, the second largest city in Telangana, registered a below average population growth. The Nagarjuna Sagar Project Township of Vijayapuri however saw a steep population decline (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Decline of Telangana Towns between 1991-2011



Source: Census of India

The Third Order: This order covered six regional wholesale market centres within a 80 km (50 miles) radius of Hyderabad. These towns were Karimnagar, Kamareddy, Mahboobnagar, Bhongir, Khammam and Adilabad. This order also included the three second order centres.

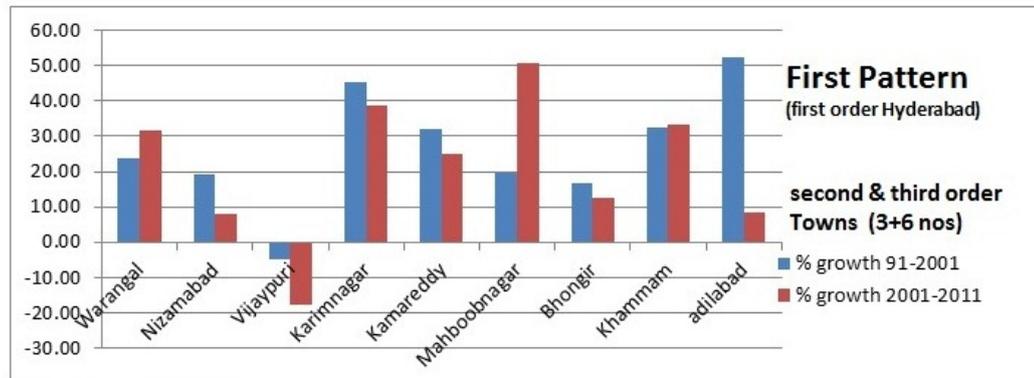
Table 3: Five-Tier Pattern-Third Order

Town/city	Population 1991	Population 2001	Population 2011	% growth 91-2001	% growth 2001-2011
Warangal	466,877	577,190	759,594	23.63	31.60
Nizamabad	240,924	286,956	310,467	19.11	8.19
Vijaypuri	20,286	19,333	15,887	-4.70	-17.82
Karimnagar	148,349	215,782	299,660	45.46	38.87
Kamareddy	48,641	64,222	80,378	32.03	25.16
Mahboobnagar	116,775	139,483	210,143	19.45	50.66
Bhongir	40,701	47,451	53,434	16.58	12.61
Khammam	148,646	196,763	262,309	32.37	33.31
Adilabad	84,233	128,196	139,103	52.19	8.51

Source: Census of India.

Only Karimnagar and Mahboobnagar managed to surpass the average urban growth rate of population of Andhra Pradesh during 2001-2011. Karimnagar, in fact, grew consistently between 2001-2011. However, the population growth rate of Adilabad, surprisingly, slipped from 52.91% in 2001 to 8.51% in 2011.

Figure 3: General decline in Population Growth Rate between 1991-2001 and 2001-2011



Source: Census of India.

The Fourth Order: This order contemplated 27 sub-zonal regional retail market centres, which included, the three second and six third order centres, as these nine towns also has fourth order functions.^[6] Except Siddipet and Suryapet, the urban population growth rate of all these centres was below the state average of 36.26%.

Table 4: Five-Tier Pattern-Fourth Order: 18 Sub Zonal Regional Market Centres

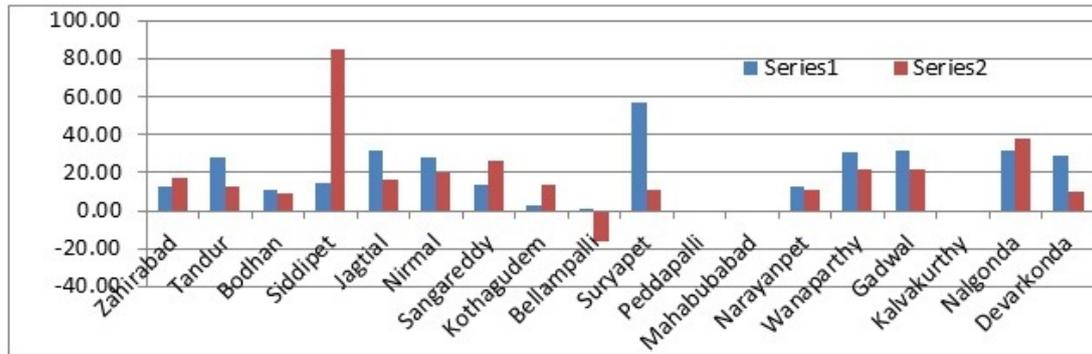
Town/city	Population 1991	Population 2001	Population 2011	% growth 1991-2001	% growth 2001-2011
Zahirabad	39,590	44,607	52,193	12.67	17.01
Tandur	45,369	57,943	65,115	27.71	12.38
Bodhan	64,386	71,355	77,639	10.82	8.81
Siddipet	54,020	61,650	113,893	14.12	84.74
Jagtial	67,965	89,438	103,962	31.59	16.24
Nirmal	57,777	74,017	88,433	28.11	19.48
Sangareddy	50,098	56,691	71,426	13.16	25.99
Kothagudem	102,061	105,265	119,450	3.14	13.48
Bellampalli	66,608	66,660	55,841	0.08	-16.23
Suryapet	60,563	95,029	105,250	56.91	10.76
Peddapalli	28,234	N.A	41,171	N.A	N.A
Mahabubabad	28,674	N.A	52,813	N.A	N.A
Narayanpet	33,434	37,529	41,752	12.25	11.25
Wanaparthy	38,553	50,262	60,949	30.37	21.26
Gadwal	40,784	53,601	65,024	31.43	21.31
Kalvakurthy	N.A	N.A	28,060	N.A	N.A
Nalgonda	84,674	111,745	153,736	31.97	37.58
Devarkonda	21,105	27,130	29,731	28.55	9.59

Source: Census of India

N.A. Not available

Figure 4: Five-Tier Pattern-Fourth Order

(Series 1 & 2 denote population growth rates during 1991-2001 and 2001-2011 respectively).



Source: Census of India

Fifth Order: The fifth order envisaged local markets to be spread all over the region. At this juncture, it is relevant to note that while the lower rung towns have only lower order functions, the higher order towns in addition to their functions are also market towns or intermediate ranked urban centres. For example, Hyderabad the highest order town is also an intermediate centre and a local market centre for its resident population.

The Multiple Urban-Industrial Nuclei Pattern

The Multiple Urban-Industrial Nuclei Pattern envisaged the development of five urban settlements—metropolitan Hyderabad, Warangal, Vijayapuri, Mahboobnagar and Kothagudem. The population of these last four cities was projected to grow between 100,000 to 250,000. In addition four “satellite towns” namely Shamshabad, Ramachandrapuram, Medchal and Ghatkesar, each with a future target population of 50,000 people were to form Hyderabad’s inner ring. These four towns were eventually subsumed by the metropolitan spread of Hyderabad.

The pattern also proposed three sub-metropolitan centers—Farooqnagar, Vikharabad and Bhongir within a distance of 40 km (25 miles) from Hyderabad and with a population between 80,000-100,000. This pattern dropped Nizamabad and included Kothagudem and Mahboobnagar.

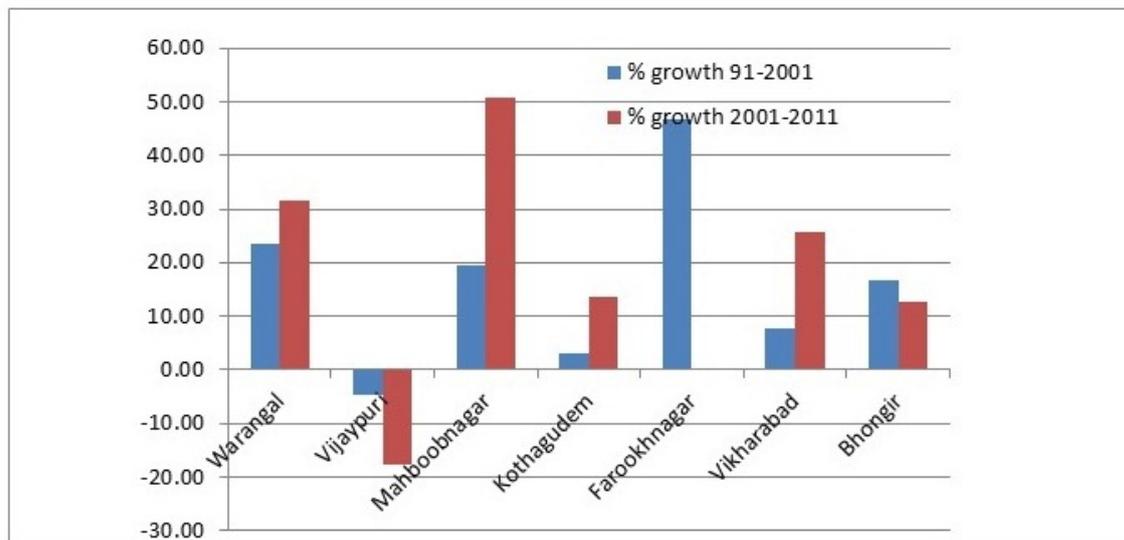
Table 4. Second Pattern--Multiple Urban-Industrial Nuclei Pattern

Town/city	Population 1991	Population 2001	Population 2011	% growth 91-2001	% growth 2001-2011

Warangal	466,877	577,190	759,594	23.63	31.6
Vijaypuri	20,286	19,333	15,887	-4.7	-17.82
Mahboobnagar	116,775	139,483	210,143	19.45	50.66
Kothagudem	102,061	105,265	119,450	3.14	13.48
Three Sub Metropolitan Centres					
Farookhnagar	23,573	34,558		46.6	
Vikharabad	39,208	42,258	53,143	7.78	25.76
Bhongir	40,701	47,451	53,434	16.58	12.61

Source: Census of India

Figure 5: Multiple Urban-Industrial Nuclei Pattern



Source: Census of India.

The Metropolitan Pattern

“The Metropolitan Pattern envisaged further concentration of economic development and growth in the peri-urban zones of Hyderabad and intensification of metropolitan functions”.

Prakasa Rao's Conclusions

Prakasa Rao opined that the Multi-Industrial Nuclei Pattern, which identified only five major centres besides Hyderabad, would eclipse the development of small and medium towns in Telangana. He concluded that the Five-Tier Pattern which covered a wide network of 27 urban centres spread all over the region was the best option for the region as well as for the towns concerned. In Prakasa Rao's words

This (Metropolitan Pattern) seems to be a rational pattern from the national planner's point of view with Hyderabad's incipient industrial growth. But from a regional planner's point of view, this pattern is obsolescent and will lead to intra sub-regional disparities.

A large number of studies conducted after 1965 regarding a suitable urban pattern for Andhra Pradesh strongly recommended adopting a conscious policy of developing small towns in the state. According to urban planning jargon, Andhra Pradesh state had a "primate" pattern similar to the pattern in West Bengal and Maharashtra where the state capital is a mega city and the "next in size" towns are far smaller.

Concentration on Hyderabad

In the last 50 years, policy makers lapped up the Metropolitan Pattern devoting all attention to Hyderabad. This applied equally to the people of undivided Andhra Pradesh as well as to the people of the Telangana region, who all flocked around Hyderabad, neglecting the smaller towns of Telangana. The now little known Vijayapuri, the Nagarjunasagar Project township, never developed. Nizamabad, Kottagudem and some other key towns stagnated and Warangal did not develop as contemplated. [\[7\]](#)

Over two decades 1991-2011, the population growth rate of most of the 27 Telangana towns listed in Prakasa Rao's Five-Tier Pattern declined. Vijayapuri and Bellampally actually recorded a fall in population even in absolute terms. Sangareddy, Siddipet, Mahboobnagar and Zahirabad—towns within close proximity of Hyderabad alone recorded some growth. Within the Telangana region, growth happened only in areas close to Hyderabad.

We may conclude that at the level of undivided Andhra Pradesh as well as within the Telangana region, Hyderabad Metropolitan area grew at the cost of smaller towns. It is hoped that bifurcation of the state will place in the hands of both the states the proverbial philosopher's stone in their quest for balanced development and a golden future.

Notes

[\[1\]](#) Late Dr V L S Prakasa Rao, (1916-1992) was then the Professor and Head of the

Department of Geography, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

[2] The paper was published in the Souvenir (Dec 1965, pages 50 to 56) of the 14th Annual Town & Country Planning Seminar conducted by the Institute of Town Planners, India at Hyderabad.

[3] "In geography, an element of [location theory](#) (*q.v.*) concerning the size and distribution of central places (settlements) within a system. Central-place theory attempts to illustrate how settlements locate in relation to one another, the amount of [market](#) area a central place can control, and why some central places function as hamlets, villages, towns, or cities. The German geographer [Walter Christaller](#) introduced central-place theory in his book entitled *Central Places in Southern Germany* (1933). The primary purpose of a settlement or market town, according to central-place theory, is the provision of goods and services for the surrounding market area. Such towns are centrally located and may be called central places. Settlements that provide more goods and services than do other places are called higher-order central places. Lower-order central places have small market areas and provide goods and services that are purchased more frequently than higher-order goods and services. Higher-order places are more widely distributed and fewer in number than lower-order places." Extract from "**Central-Place Theory.**" Encyclopædia Britannica. Ultimate Reference Suite. 2009

[4] This was followed by work on Hydroelectric Project, expansions and maintenance. Nagarjunasagar is one of the earliest and largest multi-purpose irrigation and power generation projects in India. Interestingly, Krishna River has Nalgonda district on the north bank and Guntur district on the south bank and acts as a border between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

[5] Andhra Pradesh Census 2011 gives two different figures, namely 36.26% and 20.78% for the decadal growth rate of urban population of Andhra Pradesh. The figure of 20.78 % has been stated as "recast data".

Extracts can be seen below:

Source 1:

Extract of Table 1.6 -Provisional Population Totals, Directorate of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, page18, available at <http://www.ap.gov.in/Other%20Docs/Population.pdf>, accessed on 1st Sept 2014.

District Wise Rural And Urban Percentage **Decadal Growth**, 2001-2011

AP total	Rural	Urban
11.10	1.64	36.26

Source 2 :

Extract of Chapter IV

Trends in Urbanisation, Rural Urban Distribution 2001-2011, Paper 2, Volume 2 of 2011 Andhra Pradesh, page 52, available at http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2-vol2/data_files/AP/Chapter_IV.pdf, accessed on 1st Sept 2014.

“It is evident that the net addition in urban population during each decade has been increasing. One of the significant features of the present Census in Andhra Pradesh is that, 2001-2011 is the first decade which recorded the highest increase in urban population compared to the previous censuses. In absolute terms, the urban population of the state has increased by 48,78,634 (as per re-cast data) during 2001-2011, recording 20.78% decadal growth”.

In this article the higher figure of 36.26% has been taken since comparison is made with the 2011 population figures of individual towns in absolute terms.

[6] The Central Place Theory was largely built upon figures observed by Walter Christaller for a few German cities and regions where the population size and distances between settlements displayed a pyramidal hierarchical relationship. Prakasa Rao envisaged an empirical proportion of 1:3:6:27:171 for numbers of settlements in each hierarchy. He believed the hierarchical relationship led to sustainable economic growth and viability of markets and urban settlements in a region in an interdependent manner. This theory was evident in Prakasa Rao's choice of 1:3:6:27 (18 + 9) number of towns.

[7] Kalwakurty, Mahboobabad and Peddapally are excluded from comparative tables and graphs in absence of availability of figures for all the three decades. Hyderabad population is excluded from the figures to avoid distortion in comparative graph.