

ANDHRA PRADESH'S ALLURI SITHARAMARAJU DISTRICT, A REGION WITH TOO MANY ISSUES

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Indian Constitution - Features & Significant Provisions related to The Preamble, Union & its Territories and The Citizenship

A policeman on duty in Araku, Alluri Sitharamaraju district, Andhra Pradesh. | Photo Credit: K.R. Deepak

On April 24, around midnight, the Konta Area Committee of the banned CPI (Maoist) [set fire to a private bus](#), after asking the 40 passengers in the bus to alight, on the National Highway near Sarivela in Chintoor agency area of the [newly created Alluri Sitharamaraju district of Andhra Pradesh](#). As this incident took place despite the Maoist movement in this part of the region being at its lowest ebb, questions have arisen about the need to create this district.

The recent exercise of bifurcation and re-organisation of districts by the State government has led to the number of districts growing from 13 to 26. Alluri Sitharamaraju, which has a high tribal population and low population density, was created after carving out areas from the districts of [Visakhapatnam](#) and East Godavari. It is now the second largest district in Andhra Pradesh after Prakasam.

A number of issues persist in this district. According to conservative estimates, 80% of Alluri Sitharamaraju is said to be forested area. The terrain comprising steep hills of the Eastern Ghats is difficult to navigate. About 50% of the district is yet to be connected by roads and communication lines. Every year, viral fever, dengue, chikungunya, typhoid and malaria affect the population. Deaths from these diseases are high as there are inadequate medical facilities in the region. Primary health centres and community health centres are far flung. There are several media reports about pregnant women and infants dying on their way to the nearest health centres, after being carried on makeshift 'dolis', as ambulances have no access to hundreds of villages in the district. The availability of good quality drinking water has been an issue in agency areas. Many villages continue to depend on polluted perennial streams. To make matters worse, the 11 mandals of Paderu, the administrative headquarters of the district, have gained notoriety in recent times for being the hub for ganja cultivation.

Since the late 1980s, the Maoists have enjoyed considerable sway in this area. Today, though the movement is far from powerful, there is fear that it could be revived as the district shares borders with Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Odisha, all of which are said to be part of the 'Red Corridor'. The district is under the control of J. Satish Kumar, Superintendent of Police, who has four Additional Superintendents to man the vast district, with 30 police stations and five armed police outposts.

Alluri Sitharamaraju is rich in minerals. It contains reserves of bauxite and laterite and abundant reserves of semi-precious stones. But a small hint of mining can stir a hornet's nest. The case of Niyamgiri in Odisha shows that overnight, with the patronage of the Maoists, a place can easily turn into a war zone.

While numerous issues already plague the region, carving out such a big district is detrimental to the basic idea of bringing administration closer to the people. The distance from Rampachodavaram to Paderu is around 240 km, it is 210 km from Chintoor to Paderu and 274 km from Yatapaka to Paderu. Travel from these areas to the district headquarters takes six to 10 hours. The district has 22 mandals with 11 carved out of Visakhapatnam and seven out of

Rampachodavaram and four out of Yatapaka of East Godavari. Many serving and former bureaucrats have joined the people of Rampachodavaram and Yatapaka to suggest that a separate district be created out of their region with Bhadrachalam as the district headquarters. This will not only reduce travel time and solve logistical issues, but also ensure that the Adivasis get special care.

sumit.b@thehindu.co.in

[Our code of editorial values](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com