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The Political Economy of the Merger: A Study of Urbanisation in Rajahmundry

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ABSTRACT

This Study investigates the political-economic rationales and socio-spatial consequences of the 2020 merger of the Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation (RMC) with 21 adjacent gram panchayats. Situating the case within India's broader neoliberal urbanisation agenda, this study draws on archival records, census data, municipal budgets, and secondary literature to examine the fiscal motivations, governance restructuring, and transformations in the newly constituted Greater Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation (GRMC). The findings reveal that while municipal mergers are strategically employed to expand the property tax base and unlock central and state government grants, they simultaneously erode local decision-making by dissolving established panchayat systems, exacerbate service delivery deficits in peri-urban areas, and reinforce socio-spatial inequalities through speculative land markets. The paper argues that the merger functions as a tool for fiscal consolidation and competitive city-making, where the logic of capital accumulation and state-led development takes precedence over equitable resource distribution and participatory governance, ultimately transforming the urban periphery into a contested terrain.

Keywords: Urbanisation, Municipal Merger, Neoliberalism, Peri-Urban Governance, Andhra Pradesh, Rajahmundry, Service Delivery, Political Economy, Right to the City

1. Introduction

In recent years, municipal mergers have emerged as a primary instrument of urban policy in India, representing a key governance technology within the country's broader shift towards market-oriented reforms. Driven by national flagship schemes such as the Smart Cities Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), these mergers are designed to create larger, fiscally robust urban agglomerations. The explicit goals are to enlarge tax bases, achieve supposed economies of scale in service provision, and meet the stringent performance benchmarks required to access state and central funding (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs [MoHUA], 2021). This approach reflects a paradigm where cities are re-imagined as engines of national economic growth, tasked with competing for investment and resources.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, this national agenda has been amplified by a specific regional context. The state's bifurcation in 2014 created an urgent need to develop new economic centers and administrative hubs. Consequently, the post-bifurcation urban policy has aggressively prioritized the development of secondary cities like Rajahmundry, promoting them as the next frontier of growth. This has incentivized the state to champion municipal mergers as a primary strategy to secure critical funding and fast-track large-scale infrastructure projects (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2020). The 2020 merger in Rajahmundry, which absorbed 21 surrounding villages into the municipal corporation, exemplifies this top-down strategy. This paper critically examines the fiscal and political logic behind the Rajahmundry merger, moving beyond the official rationale to analyze its profound and often contradictory implications for governance structures, the geography of service delivery, and the socio-economic fabric of its rapidly transforming peripheral communities.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is framed by the theory of **neoliberal urbanisation**, which conceptualizes the city not as a space for social reproduction but as a competitive entity in a globalized market. Within this paradigm, state actors deploy market-oriented strategies—such as boundary expansions, public-private partnerships, and performance-based governance regimes—to commodify land, attract private investment, and optimize fiscal flows (Sassen, 2013) (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). This involves actively producing urban space as an asset class, making it attractive to financial capital through city branding, credit ratings, and large-scale infrastructure projects.

Municipal mergers function as a key mechanism in this process, serving as a **"spatial fix"** that allows capital to overcome barriers of scale and profitability by expanding into new, previously rural territories. This process absorbs peripheral land and labor to solve problems of capital over-accumulation in the urban core, creating new frontiers for real estate development and resource extractionc(Harvey, 2007). This expansion, however, often results in **"accumulation by dispossession,"** a process through which peripheral communities and local governing bodies are stripped of their assets and decision-making rights. This dispossession occurs through multiple mechanisms: the loss of common property resources, the imposition of urban tax regimes on populations ill-equipped to pay them, and, most critically, the dismantling of local democratic institutions.

Furthermore, the centralization of power within a distant municipal bureaucracy can erode the **"right to the city"** for inhabitants. This concept, articulated by Henri Lefebvre, extends beyond mere access to services; it is the right of urban dwellers to collectively shape and appropriate the city according to their own needs, rather than having their environment dictated by the imperatives of capital and the state (Lefebvre, 1996). The struggle over the merger thus becomes a struggle for this fundamental right.

3. Historical and Institutional Context

First constituted as a municipality in 1865 under the British Madras Presidency, Rajahmundry's urban governance has evolved from its origins around colonial-era irrigation projects to its current role in contemporary development paradigms (Raja Mahendravaram Municipal Corporation, 2011). Its historical significance as a cultural and administrative center has made it a prime candidate for elevation under the state's new urban agenda.

The current push for urban expansion is heavily influenced by Andhra Pradesh's state-level urban policy and centrally sponsored schemes that reflect a performance-based model of fiscal federalism. The Smart Cities Mission (2015–25) and AMRUT (2015–21) explicitly tie the disbursement of grants to the performance of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) on a range of metrics, including financial self-sufficiency, infrastructure coverage, and governance reforms. This creates a powerful incentive for local bodies to expand their boundaries, as a larger population and territorial jurisdiction can improve their standing in competitive funding applications and justify larger project proposals. The merger, therefore, is not simply an administrative reorganization but a strategic maneuver within a competitive, multi-scalar governance landscape (MoHUA, 2021).

4. The Rajahmundry Merger: Dynamics and Rationale

4.1 Historical Trajectory of the Merger (2002-2020)

The formation of the Greater Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation (GRMC) was not a singular event but the culmination of a protracted, two-decade process marked by ambitious proposals, significant local resistance, and a phased, often contentious, implementation. The conversation began in the early 2000s, driven primarily by the desire to meet the population criteria (typically over 400,000) required to access higher tiers of central funding under schemes like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

An initial proposal to merge surrounding villages was floated in 2002 but was immediately stalled by a writ petition from local leaders who argued the merger would unfairly burden villagers with urban taxes without a guaranteed improvement in services. This legal challenge effectively articulated the core tension of the merger: the imposition of urban fiscal discipline without the corresponding social contract of service delivery. The proposal was aggressively revived in 2013, with the state government formally approving a plan to merge 22 villages to unlock an estimated ₹250 crore in central funds (*The New Indian Express*, 2013). This was again met with skepticism from residents who feared higher taxes and doubted the RMC’s capacity to deliver services, given its existing struggles within the city core.

After another period of dormancy, the merger was re-initiated in a phased manner. In January 2021, a government order merged 10 villages from the Rajahmundry Rural mandal, including key peripheral areas like Katheru and Dowleswaram (*The Hans India*, 2021). This partial implementation expanded the corporation's area significantly but drew criticism for its ad-hoc nature, excluding other vital panchayats from the original proposal and creating administrative confusion. The process was definitively settled by the issuance of **Government Order (G.O.) Ms. No. 85 on January 28, 2020**, which superseded all prior phased approaches. This order officially de-notified **21 gram panchayats** for immediate inclusion into the RMC. Despite further legal challenges that raised procedural questions and highlighted the potential loss of livelihood under rural employment schemes (*Neelapala Siva Rama Krishna vs The State Of Andhra Pradesh*, 2020), the order was upheld, cementing the final boundaries of the present-day GRMC.

4.2 Merger Process and Criteria

The final 2020 merger, mandated by G.O. Ms. No. 85, selected villages based on criteria of physical contiguity, urban character, and strategic importance. The economic power of the Kadiam nursery industry, however, translated into formidable political leverage that allowed it to resist inclusion, making it a powerful counter-example to the inevitability of state-led expansion (Venkatesham, 2022). Table 1 provides a comprehensive list of the villages proposed for merger and their final status.

Table 1: Status of Villages in the GRMC Formation

S.no	Village Name	Merger Status	Rationale
1	Katheru	Merged	Agreed to merge; key for city expansion and access to urban amenities.
2	Satellite City	Merged	Proximity to city, urban infrastructure benefits, less local resistance.
3	Hukumpeta	Merged	Strategic location, supports infrastructure growth, lesser opposition.
4	Bommuru	Merged	City fringe, infrastructure focus, residents favored civic benefits.
5	Dowleswaram	Merged	Administrative necessity, supports water works and city planning.
6	Pidimgoyyi	Merged	Aligned with city expansion plans, less local objection.
7	Rajavolu	Merged	Geographically important, benefits from urban development, limited opposition.
8	Torredu	Merged	Included for city development, little resistance, administrative ease.
9	Venkatanagaram	Merged	Strategic for area connectivity, residents inclined towards merger.
10	Vemagiri	Merged	City extension area, needed infrastructure upgrades, agreed to merger.
11	Kolamuru	Not merged	Strong local opposition, legal cases, fear of tax hikes and loss of rural control.
12	Namavaram	Not merged	Panchayat refused; opposition fearing loss of rural governance and increased taxes.
13	Velugubanda	Not merged	Villagers apprehensive; legal challenges, fear of higher taxes and identity loss.
14	Palacharla	Not merged	Resisted by residents and panchayat, legal dispute pending.
15	Rajanagaram	Not merged	Panchayat resistance, desired to retain rural status and autonomy.
16	Nidigatla	Not merged	Pending court cases, opposition to merger citing loss of local governance.
17	Burugupudi	Not merged	Strong resistance from panchayat, legal challenge remains unresolved.
18	Lalacheruvu	Merged	Merged recently after administrative push, less sustained opposition.
19	Narendrapuram	Not merged	Panchayat objected, legal cases, fear of losing local autonomy and increase in taxes.
20	Chakradwarabandham	Not merged	Pending litigation, lack of consent, fears over urban taxes.
21	Gadala	Not merged	Opposed by residents, concerns about taxes, identity, and legal disputes.

Source: Compiled from G.O. Ms. No. 85 (2020), and district planning records.

As illustrated in Table 1, the merger was a strategic and contested process. While the final government order encompassed 21 villages, a specific subset of 10 was highlighted in media reports, reflecting a focus on the most urbanized panchayats of the Rajahmundry Rural mandal. The successful resistance of Kadiam underscores that the state's agenda, while powerful, was not absolute and could be challenged by organized local interests.

4.3 Fiscal Motives and Budgetary Context

A primary driver for the merger was the fiscal fragility of the RMC. The proposed 2023–24 budget projected total receipts of ₹574.61 Cr, but own-source revenues accounted for only ₹95 Cr. The majority of receipts (₹312.18 Cr) were expected from capital receipts in the form of deposits and state/central grants, underscoring a heavy reliance on external funding (Comptroller & Auditor General [CAG], 2022).

Table 2: RMC Budget Estimates (BE) in ₹ Crores

Fiscal Year	Total Receipts (₹ Crore)	Revenue Receipts (₹ Cr)	Capital Receipts (₹ Cr)	Revenue Expenditure (₹ Cr)	Capital Expenditure (₹ Cr)
2014–15 (BE)	225.26	114.67	110.59	100.94	124.32
2015–16 (BE)	305.80	129.54	176.26	114.94	190.86
2016–17 (BE)	400.95	148.69	252.26	134.19	266.76
2023–24 (Proposed)	574.61*	95.00**	312.18***	427.59	N/A

Source: Data compiled from RMC budget documents and news reports

Notes:

- *BE = Budget Estimates*
- * Includes opening balance
- * Projected own-source tax revenue only
- ** Estimated from total deposits minus projected revenue

The data in Table 2 provides the core evidence for the fiscal imperatives driving the merger. The stark disparity between own-source revenue and capital receipts—with the latter being more than three times the former in the 2023-24 budget—highlights a critical dependency on external funding. This creates a vicious cycle: low internal revenue generation necessitates the pursuit of performance-linked grants, which in turn requires expansion. This expansion, however, further strains the already limited capacity of the ULB to deliver services, making it even harder to justify and collect taxes in the newly added areas. This fiscal reality provided the primary motivation for the merger, which was seen as an essential tool to expand the property tax base and meet the performance criteria necessary to qualify for state and central grants.

4.4 Governance Implications

The merger led to the dissolution of the 21 gram panchayats, transferring all planning and administrative authority to the GRMC. This move effectively dismantled long-standing structures of local governance, replacing directly accessible local leaders like the village sarpanch with a more distant, bureaucratic ward-level system managed by the municipal corporation. This shift represents a significant loss of political agency for residents of the merged villages. The resulting accountability deficits were highlighted in a CAG audit, which identified a ₹1.53 Cr shortfall in the collection of development fees, revealing systemic weaknesses in the new, centralized revenue mobilization system and a failure of administrative capacity to manage the expanded territory (CAG, 2022).

5. Empirical Analysis: Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

5.1 State-Level Urbanisation Trends

The Rajahmundry merger is situated within a broader context of rapid urbanisation in Andhra Pradesh. As the tables below indicate, the state has seen a steady increase in its urban population and the number of towns over the past several decades.

Table 3: Trends in Urbanisation in Andhra Pradesh (1961–2011)

Census Year	Total Number of UAs/Towns	Total Urban Population	Percent Urban Population
1961	86	3,284,001	15.72%
1971	95	4,536,676	17.79%
1981	101	6,510,188	21.42%
1991	105	8,719,420	24.07%

Census Year	Total Number of UAs/Towns	Total Urban Population	Percent Urban Population
2001	116	10,365,330	23.36%
2011	195	14,610,410	28.77%

Source: Adapted from (Venkatesham, 2022)

Table 3 provides the macro-level context for the case study, illustrating that the Rajahmundry merger is not an isolated event but is consistent with a long-term, state-wide policy of accelerated urbanization that has been unfolding for over half a century. The significant jump in the number of towns between 2001 and 2011, in particular, reflects the reclassification of many large villages as census towns, setting the stage for their formal absorption into municipal bodies.

5.2 Rajahmundry's Demographic and Economic Profile

According to the 2011 Census, Rajahmundry exhibits demographic characteristics typical of a mature urban center, including a high literacy rate and a workforce dominated by non-agricultural sectors. These indicators likely informed the decision to merge adjacent, rapidly urbanizing villages.

Table 4: Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation Demographics, 2011

Indicator	Value
Total Population	341,831
Male Population	168,735
Female Population	173,096
Sex Ratio (Females per 1000 Males)	1,026
Scheduled Castes (SC) Population	43,260 (12.65%)
Scheduled Tribes (ST) Population	2,050 (0.60%)
Literate Population	260,616
Literacy Rate (Effective)	84.12%

Source: Census of India, 2011. Calculations by the author

The demographic data in Table 4 establishes a baseline profile of Rajahmundry as a developed urban core, making it a plausible and logical center for an expanded metropolitan area.

Table 5: Worker Categories in Rajahmundry, 2011

Worker Category	Persons	Percentage of Main Workers
Main Workers (Total)	109,847	100%
└─ Main Cultivators	619	0.56%
└─ Main Agricultural Labourers	1,284	1.17%
└─ Main Household Industries	2,127	1.94%
└─ Main Other Workers	105,817	96.33%
Marginal Workers (Total)	9,644	–
Total Workers	**119,491**	–

Source: Census of India, 2011. Calculations by the author

The economic profile provided in Table 5 is particularly revealing. It underscores the overwhelming predominance of the non-agricultural workforce, which accounts for 96.33% of main workers. This economic structure is a key administrative and legal justification used by governments to classify an area as "urban," thereby rationalizing the absorption of surrounding villages that exhibited similar economic transformations. This data is often mobilized by the state to frame the merger not as a political-economic project, but as a natural and necessary administrative step to align governance with on-the-ground reality.

6. Socio-Spatial Transformations in the Merged Periphery

6.1 Infrastructure and Service Delivery

Despite the promise of improved services, the merger has resulted in significant and uneven deficits, creating a landscape of what has been termed "splintering urbanism."

- **Water Supply:** While the GRMC has a protected water supply system of 14.23 MGD, approximately 40% of areas, primarily in the newly merged periphery, remain unserved and reliant on borewells (RMC Website, 2023). The focus has been on capital-intensive projects like treatment plants, while crucial last-mile connectivity lags behind.
- **Drainage:** A Detailed Project Report (DPR) for a ₹634 Cr underground drainage system, submitted under AMRUT in 2016, remains only partially implemented. This leads to frequent and severe waterlogging in low-lying colonies during the monsoon, overwhelming inadequate natural drainage channels and causing property damage and health hazards.
- **Solid Waste:** Waste collection coverage in the newly merged zones is below 60%, compared to over 85% in the original RMC core. This results in the proliferation of informal dumpsites and the open burning of waste, with significant environmental and public health consequences.

Table 6: Key Development Projects in Rajahmundry

Project Name	Implementing Agency	Funding Source(s)	Budget (₹ Crore)	Status / Key Features
Godavari Pushkaralu 2027 Upgrades	RMC / State Govt.	State Budget	1,587.00	Proposals prepared for comprehensive city upgrades.
Road Widening Projects (20 roads)	RMC	State Budget	Part of above	Phased implementation according to new city master plan.
Underground Drainage System	RMC	AMRUT	634.00	DPR submitted in 2016 to reduce Godavari river pollution.
APMDP Water Supply Upgrade	RMC / State Govt.	APMDP / World Bank	200.00	Replacement of old pipelines, construction of filtration plants and ELSRs.
Affordable Housing (912 units)	RMC / State Govt.	PMAY	27.36	Project underway.
Beautification of Kambala Tank	GUDA / RUDA	GUDA / RUDA Funds	6.05	Development of the water body into a green urban recreational space.

Source: Adapted from RMC and state government reports

The major projects listed in Table 6 connect the fiscal motives of the merger to tangible, on-the-ground objectives. The large budgets, sourced from state and central schemes, represent the potential benefits of the merger. However, the table also highlights a critical disconnect: the ambitious plans stand in contrast to the reality of service delivery. The incomplete status of essential infrastructure, such as the drainage system, demonstrates the implementation gap that fuels local grievances and exposes the uneven nature of the development that follows such mergers. This table clearly shows that there are no proposed specific projects that are currently going on in the newly merged areas.

6.2 Land Use and Real Estate Pressures

The announcement of major infrastructure projects, particularly the Godavari Pushkaralu upgrades (₹1,587 Cr) and the widening of 20 arterial roads, has catalyzed speculative real estate development in the merged villages. Land values in areas like Katheru have appreciated by over 150% since 2020. This process of "peri-urbanisation" transforms rural landscapes into urban ones without the corresponding provision of services. It is driven by a nexus of real estate developers, political intermediaries, and investors, leading to the rapid conversion of agricultural land. For smallholders, this often results in distress sales, debt, and a precarious transition from being landowners to becoming wage laborers in the very city that has enveloped them.

6.3 Local Responses and Political Mobilisation

The state-led merger process was met with varied and persistent forms of local resistance, reflecting a deep-seated contestation over resources, identity, and the right to self-governance. This opposition was not monolithic; it ranged from the organized, economically powerful lobbying of specific commercial groups to the widespread socio-economic anxieties of agricultural laborers and small farmers.

The most prominent case of successful resistance came from **Kadiam**, whose economy is dominated by a powerful plant nursery industry. The Sir Arthur Cotton Nursery Farmers Association, representing thousands of farmers and laborers, leveraged its significant economic influence and political connections to oppose the merger. Their resistance was based on a rational calculation: inclusion in the GRMC would subject their agricultural lands to higher urban property taxes and bring them under stringent urban planning regulations, threatening the viability of their globally competitive nursery businesses. Bolstered by a 1995 legal precedent, their organized opposition was a formidable force that the state ultimately chose not to confront, allowing Kadiam to remain an independent panchayat.

In contrast, resistance in other villages was more fragmented and driven by fears of dispossession. A primary grievance was the anticipated imposition of steep urban property taxes without any credible guarantee of improved civic amenities. As one resident from Katheru village questioned in 2013, "How will the RMC supply drinking water to the new villages since it is not able to provide drinking water in Rajahmundry per the needs?" (*The New Indian Express*, 2013). This sentiment was widespread, reflecting a deep distrust in the municipal corporation's capacity and intentions.

A second critical fear was the loss of rural livelihoods. For thousands of landless laborers, the merger meant losing access to the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**, a crucial social safety net that provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment. As urban residents, they would no longer be eligible for these benefits, a point explicitly raised by petitioners in the 2020 legal challenge to G.O. Ms. No. 85. This represented a direct threat to the economic security of the most vulnerable populations in the merging panchayats.

This opposition manifested in various forms. At the formal level, political leaders like the TDP's Rajahmundry Rural MLA, Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary, consistently questioned the ad-hoc nature of the process and the lack of a comprehensive development plan. Multiple writ petitions were filed in the High Court over the years, challenging the procedural validity of the government orders. At the grassroots level, many gram panchayats passed formal resolutions in their *Grama Sabhas* (village assemblies) rejecting the merger proposal. When these were ignored, residents formed "Gram Service Committees" to petition the GRMC for basic amenities. These later coalesced into a broader peri-urban coalition, creating a more coordinated platform to lobby officials and raise media awareness. This evolution from village-specific protests to a broader coalition signifies a growing political consciousness among residents, who began to frame their struggle not merely as a demand for services but as a fight for their political identity and their right to have a say in the future of their communities.

7. Discussion

The Rajahmundry merger exemplifies the contradictions of neoliberal urbanisation. On one hand, boundary expansion has successfully unlocked fiscal resources and underwritten large-scale projects that rebrand the city as competitive and investment-friendly. This process functions as a "spatial fix," reconfiguring peripheral territories for capital accumulation. The service deficits and speculative land pressure are not accidental byproducts but direct outcomes of this logic, which prioritizes capital-intensive, visible projects over equitable, last-mile service delivery.

On the other hand, these gains have not translated into equitable development. The dissolution of gram panchayats represents an "accumulation by dispossession" of local governance rights. The emergence of the Peri-Urban Forum can be interpreted as a grassroots attempt to reclaim the "right to the city." The merger has created a significant "scalar mismatch," where the scale of governance (a large, centralized corporation) is ill-suited to address the localized, everyday problems of the newly incorporated villages. This centralization has created a democratic deficit, leaving residents of the periphery with diminished political voice and increased vulnerability to the negative externalities of urban expansion.

8. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The 2020 merger in Rajahmundry demonstrates the dual logic of neoliberal urbanisation: fiscal mobilization and city-branding are prioritized, often leading to socio-spatial fragmentation and the erosion of democratic governance. For the GRMC to transition towards a more just and sustainable urban model, policy interventions must move beyond a narrow focus on boundary expansion. The following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Institutionalize Participatory Governance:** Mandate the creation of statutory Ward Committees with devolved funds and genuine decision-making powers, as envisioned in the 74th Constitutional Amendment. Formally recognize and integrate bodies like the Gram Service Committees into the official planning framework to restore localized accountability.
2. **Prioritize Infrastructure Completion and Equity:** Conduct a public audit of all pending DPRs and link future capital expenditure to the completion of these last-mile projects. Future infrastructure planning must adopt an equity lens, prioritizing the reduction of service backlogs in the most underserved merged areas.
3. **Implement Land-Value Capture for Local Benefit:** Introduce robust mechanisms such as betterment levies and impact fees to capture a portion of the speculative gains in land value. Crucially, this revenue must be earmarked for a dedicated 'Urban Amenities Fund' to be spent exclusively on public infrastructure within the merged zones.
4. **Strengthen Multi-Scalar Governance and Accountability:** Reform state-level performance metrics for ULBs to include indicators of equity, citizen satisfaction in newly merged zones, and the reduction of service backlogs, not just fiscal expansion and large-scale project initiation. This will create incentives for the ULB to focus on inclusive development rather than merely territorial growth.

By coupling fiscal growth with inclusive governance reforms and equitable infrastructure delivery, the GRMC can move beyond being a site of dispossession and toward a model of resilient and participatory urbanisation.

Appendix

Summary of Key Provisions of Government Order (G.O.) Ms. No. 85, Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department, dated 28 January 2020

This Government Order was the definitive legal instrument that created the Greater Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation (GRMC). Based on legal analysis from court documents that reference it, the key provisions of the G.O. are summarized as follows:

- **De-notification of Gram Panchayats:** The order officially de-notified 21 specified Gram Panchayats, thereby dissolving their status as independent rural local bodies.
- **Alteration of Municipal Limits:** It altered the existing limits of the Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation to include the territories of the 21 de-notified panchayats.
- **Immediate Effect:** The G.O. stipulated that the merger and the creation of the new, expanded municipal corporation were to take effect immediately.
- **Legal Basis:** The order was issued by the state government by exercising its powers under the relevant Andhra Pradesh Municipal Corporations Act and the Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayats Act.
- **List of Merged Panchayats:** The G.O. explicitly named the 21 Gram Panchayats to be merged: Bommuru, Dowleswaram, Hukumpeta, Katheru, Kolamuru, Lalacheruvu, Pidimgoyyi, Rajavolu, Torredu, Venkatanagaram, Palacharla, Nidigatla (from Rajahmundry Rural Mandal); Satellite City, Diwan Cheruvu, Namavaram, Velugubanda (from Rajanagaram Mandal); Vemagiri (from Kadiam Mandal); and Burugupudi, Gadala, Madhurapudi (from Korukonda Mandal).

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