



ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ రాజ పత్రము
THE ANDHRA PRADESH GAZETTE
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

W.No.33

AMARAVATI, FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2026

G.398

PART II - MISCELLANEOUS NOTIFICATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC

--X--

NOTIFICATIONS BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS Etc.,

**COLLECTOR & DISTRICT MAGISTRATE,
EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, BHIMAVARAM.**

Roc. No. 1945528/2025/Magl

Dated :07-08-2026

NARSAPURAM DIVISION- PALAKOLLU MANDAL- REPRESENTATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, WEST GODAVARI, BHIMAVARAM REGARDING CASTE VERIFICATION OF Sri BUNGA LAZAR, S/o CHARLES, R/o PALAMURU VILLAGE, PALAKOLLU MANDAL- FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIRMAN DLSC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF G.O.Ms.No.58 SOCIAL WELFARE (J) DEPARTMENT DT: 12.05.1997 - PERSONAL HEARING CONDUCTED BY THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, WEST GODAVARI ON 28.07.2026.

- Read:-
1. Reference received from the Superintendent of Police, West Godavari, Bhimavaram Dated 18.09.2025, received by this office Dated 22.09.2025.
 2. Roc e.No.1945528/2025/Magl Constituting Joint Inspection Team Dated 06.10.2025.
 3. DLSC Conducted on 10.10.2025, 04.04.2026.
 4. Report of the Joint Inspection Committee to the Chairman, DLSC, Dated 06.04.2026.
 5. Report of the DLSC submitted to the District Collector, West Godavari Dated 07.07.2026.

6. Personal Hearing conducted by the District Collector, West Godavari, Bhimavaram Dated 28.07.2026.
7. G.O.Ms. No.58, Social Welfare(J) Department, 12th May,1997,
Government of Andhra Pradesh.

ORDER:-

The Superintendent of Police, West Godavari, Bhimavaram had made a reference to the District Collector, West Godavari, vide 1st read above to delve into the caste of Sri Bunga Lazar, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal, who was the complainant / victim in Crime No.44/2025 of Palakollu Rural Police Station, filed U/s 335 r/w 3(5) BNS, 3(1)(r)(s) of SC/St (PoA) Act, 1989 amended in 2015 r/w 175(3) BNS Dated 17.03.2025, for further investigation in accordance with the provisions of G.O.Ms.No.58, Social Welfare(J) Department, Dated : 12.05.1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

The Complaint of the Superintendent of Police, West Godavari, Bhimavaram was forwarded to the District Level Scrutiny Committee under Rule 8(d) of the Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Backward Classes) Regulations of Issue of Community, nativity and Date of Birth Certificates Rules, 1997 vide G.O.Ms.No.58, Social Welfare (J) Department, 12th May 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh to determine the social status of Sri Bunga Lazar, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal.

Vide 2nd read above The Joint Collector & Chairman, DLSC had appointed Joint Inspection Team in accordance with the provisions of G.O.Ms. No. 58, Social Welfare (J) Dt. 12.05. 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh. As per the provisions mentioned G.O.Ms. No. 58, Social Welfare (J) Dt. 12.05. 1997 the DLSC was constituted as follows:

1. Chairman- Joint Collector, West Godavari.
2. Convener member- District Revenue Officer, West Godavari.
3. Member- District Social Welfare Officer, West Godavari.
4. Member- District Backward Classes Welfare Officer, West Godavari
5. Member- District Tribal Welfare Officer, West Godavari.

Further, the Director of Social Welfare, Social Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh had addressed a letter to the District Collector, West Godavari that the Ambedkar Research & Training Institute (AP&TI) was non functional since long back and at present there are no research staff working and further informed that the Dy. Director (SW) / Dist. SC Welfare & Empowerment Officer is also one of the member of the District Level Scrutiny Committee and his services can be utilized on behalf of the O/o Director of Social Welfare.

The Joint Collector & Chairman of DLSC constituted a Joint Inspection Team consisting of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsapuram, The District Social Welfare & Empowerment Officer, Bhimavaram, The District BC Welfare Officer, Bhimavaram, The District Tribal Welfare Officer, Bhimavaram to submit detailed report on the academic records, customs, rituals, mode of marriage, death ceremonies, method of burial of dead bodies, deity, form of worship, Educational and caste details of the Mother and Father as recorded in their Study certificates if any, Panchanama from the local elders and village heads/Town heads pertaining to Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal.

The Joint Inspection team consisting of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsapuram, The District Social Welfare & Empowerment Officer, Bhimavaram, The District BC Welfare Officer, Bhimavaram, The District Tribal Welfare Officer, Bhimavaram submitted report as follows:

The Joint Inspection Team conducted a joint enquiry on 12.02.2026, including field verification at Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal, and examination of relevant records, local enquiry, and interaction with the individual and his family members.

The complaint, in essence, alleges that Sri Bunga Lazar has obtained a false Scheduled Caste (SC) certificate.

During the course of enquiry, the Committee visited the residence of Sri Bunga Lazar and observed that he is deaf and dumb and is unable to communicate verbally. Statements were gathered through available

means and from family members and local sources. Further, the committee opined that Sri Bunga Lazar follows Hindu religion as per the wishes and practices of his family elders and also stated that he does not attend church and that he follows Hindu customs.

At the same time, as alleged by the complainant, it was examined whether Sri Bunga Lazar is frequently visiting a church and whether he is a member of any church. However, no documentary or credible evidence was produced to substantiate the claim that he is a member of any church. Further, no proof such as a Baptism Certificate or any record of conversion to Christianity was furnished during the enquiry.

It is also observed during the field enquiry that no religious symbols, photographs, or worship-related objects were found in the house which could conclusively establish whether he professes Hinduism or Christianity. However, it is noted that family functions and social practices are being conducted in accordance with Hindu customs. It is further observed that the family members are not attending church regularly.

It is also brought out during enquiry that the marriage of Sri Bunga Lazar was performed long ago, and no documentary evidence is available regarding the nature or form of the marriage ceremony.

On careful examination of the records, field enquiry, and statements gathered, the following observations are made by the Joint Inspection Team :

- Sri Bunga Lazar is deaf and dumb and is unable to communicate verbally.
- There is no documentary evidence such as Baptism Certificate or conversion record to establish that he has embraced Christianity.
- The allegation that he is a member of a church is not supported by any tangible or verifiable evidence.
- No religious indicators or materials were found at the residence to conclusively establish his religion.
- Family customs and social practices appear to be in accordance with Hindu traditions.
- The family members are not found to be regularly attending church.

- No records are available regarding his marriage, as it was performed long ago.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to note the principles laid down by the *Hon'ble Supreme Court in Kumari Madhuri Patil vs Addl. Commissioner, Tribal Development (1994)*, wherein it has been held that caste verification must be based on thorough enquiry, examination of records, local investigation, and assessment of social customs and traits, and that conclusions cannot be drawn on mere allegations without supporting evidence. Further, in *Kailash Sonkar vs Smt. Maya Devi (1984)*, the *Hon'ble Supreme Court* observed that mere allegation or even conversion does not automatically result in loss of caste status unless it is clearly established that the individual has completely renounced the original customs and has been accepted into the new religion. *The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Soosai vs Union of India (1985)* has also held that the burden of proof lies on the person alleging conversion, and such conversion must be proved with cogent and convincing evidence.

The Joint Inspection Committee submitted the report that in the light of the legal principles laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the District Level Scrutiny Committee observed that there is no substantial or conclusive evidence to establish that Sri Bunga Lazar has converted to Christianity or is practicing Christianity in a manner that would affect his caste status. Although there is no direct documentary evidence conclusively establishing his religious status, the available material, family practices, and absence of proof of conversion indicate continuity of Hindu customs. Therefore, in the absence of any credible evidence to the contrary, the Committee opined that there are no sufficient grounds to invalidate the Scheduled Caste (SC) status of Sri Bunga Lazar, and concluded that the caste status of Sri Bunga Lazar, S/o Charles, Palamuru Village, Palacole Mandal, may be treated as falling under Scheduled Caste (Mala) category.

The detailed hearings of District Level Scrutiny Committee (DLSC) were conducted on 10.10.2025 and 04.04.2026, attended by Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal and members of the District Level Scrutiny Committee (DLSC) along with officers concerned.

In view of the report of the Joint Inspection team, vide 5th read above, the DLSC opined that Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal belongs to **Scheduled Caste Status (SC-MALA) Community** and is not recommended for

cancellation by the District Collector, West Godavari.

On receipt of the findings from the District Level Scrutiny Committee, the District Collector, West Godavari has issued final notice and conducted a personal hearing to the parties concerned, on 28.07.2026. During the Personal hearing so conducted, basing on the recommendations of the District Level Scrutiny Committee, the District Collector, West Godavari has, after giving a reasonable opportunity of being heard to Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal.

Thus, considering the above facts and circumstances as discussed above, it is concluded that Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal belongs to **Scheduled Caste Status (SC-MALA) Community**.

As per Rule 9(7) of G.O.Ms No.58, Social Welfare (J) Department, 12th May, 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh reads as follows :

"The District Collector shall then decide whether the certificate holder is genuine or fraudulently and in case of his having obtained a Community, Nativity and Date of Birth Certificate fraudulently, the District Collector shall pass an order cancelling the certificate issued, within one month from the date of receipt of the findings of the Scrutiny Committee and shall issue notification to that effect, to be published in the District Gazette."

In view of the above, I, C.Nagarani, I.A.S., Collector & District Magistrate, West Godavari in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 5(1) of the Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Backward Classes) Regulations of Issue of Community, Nativity and Date of Birth Certificates Act, 16/93 read with Rules 1993, read with sub rule 7 of Rule 9 of the Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Backward Classes) Regulations of Issue of Community, Nativity and Date of Birth Certificates Rules, 1997 vide G.O.Ms No 58, Social Welfare (J) Department, 12th May, 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh hereby uphold the Community Certificate issued vide Annexure III dated 12.06.2025 issued in favor of

Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal by the Tahsildar, Palakollu, and that Sri Bunga Lazaru, S/o Charles, R/o Palamuru Village, Palakollu Mandal belongs to **Scheduled Caste Status (SC-MALA) Community**.

An appeal against this order lies before the Government within 30 days from the date of issue of this order under Rule 11(1) of G.O.Ms No 58, Social Welfare (J) Department, 12th May, 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

C NAGARANI,
Collector, District Magistrate,
West Godavari, Bhimavaram.

--X--