

**Andhra official had school register changed to seek tribal status**

# Former DGP faked ST certificate

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Hyderabad, Dec.1: The former director-general of police of Andhra Pradesh, Mr R.K. Ragala, is facing charges for using a false Scheduled Tribe certificate to enter the all-India services.

In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court directed the state government not to give any reservation benefit to the retired official's family members. The court came down heavily on an earlier judgment of the Andhra Pradesh High Court which directed the state government not to harass the official who had gone through several inquiries at the fag end of his tenure.

The government had filed a writ petition in the High Court in 1989 alleging that Ragalas were originally Telaga-Kapus. An enquiry by the tribal welfare director revealed that in 1952, Mr Ragala got a relative of his to change his caste from Telaga to

Konda-kapu on the secondary school leaving certificate register. The relative was a government official.

There were 26 Ragala students in the same school but none of them claimed tribal status. None of the other relatives of the official have taken advantage of being tribals, the report added.

With several such cases of bogus caste certificates, the state government issued an ordinance in 1993 to regulate the issue of caste certificates. The power of village officials was transferred to senior officials at the district headquarters. The government also held that it had powers to revise certificates.

When the Mandal report was implemented in the state in early 90's, the backward caste population multiplied overnight. The government then set up a special committee to screen the beneficiaries of the new quota.

During the inquiry, several cases of IPS and IAS officials who used bogus caste cer-

tificates came to light. Although the government issued directives on the issue, they were suppressed. However, it soon exploded into a fight between the IAS and the IPS lobbies in the state.

According to estimates, the government cancelled nearly 13,000 bogus caste certificates. A 1993 ordinance also made the issue of bogus certificates a punishable offense. Offenses under Act 16 of 1993 were also made non-bailable and cognizable.

Voluntary organisations working in the tribal belt wanted the government to withdraw all certificates issued after 1985 for scrutiny as most of them were believed to have been acquired by non-tribals to exploit the quota system.

They alleged that nearly 75,000 such bogus certificates had been issued and appealed to the government to stay their implementation till completion of inquiry.