

Maharashtra: PIL seeks quota for Dhangar community in ST category in jobs and education

A PIL was today filed in Bombay High Court seeking a direction to the Maharashtra government to consider providing reservation to Dhangar (shepherd) community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category in jobs and education.

The PIL was filed by activist Hemant Patil who said Dhangar community was already included in the ST list in Maharashtra but was never considered by the government for reservation in jobs and education in the ST category.

Earlier, Patil had filed a PIL seeking separate reservation for the community in the state. This PIL is still pending in the high court. Patil in the fresh PIL prayed for reservation to the community in the ST category and it is expected to come up for hearing next week, according to the petitioner's lawyer RN Kachave.

The petitioner contended that on July 12 he had made a representation to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis seeking implementation of reservation for the shepherd community in the ST category as it was included in the ST list.

Patil, who is also president of NGO 'Bharat Against Corruption', said he had also protested on the issue in front of Vidhan Bhavan along with his supporters on August 1, though the state government has not yet taken any action.

The PIL said that the ST list was amended as per the recommendations of Kalekar report. The ST list of the then Madhya Pradesh at serial number 26 listed Dhangar community without referring to any particular district or tehsil. This meant that Dhangar community from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and some parts of Maharashtra were included in ST category.

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It said that the ST list of the then Bombay (now Maharashtra) at serial number 27 listed Dhangars without referring to any area which meant that members of the community from the entire Bombay state were included in the Scheduled Tribe category.

On May 1, 1960, Gujarat and Maharashtra became separate states. The ST list of Maharashtra showed the community at serial number 27, said the PIL. At the relevant time, one of the communities in the new state was Dhangar which was included in the ST category.

However, till date the community has not been given reservation in the ST category, Patil said.

At present, the community gets a reservation in Nomadic Tribe category only, the PIL said and demanded that the state government should consider giving reservation to members of this community in the ST category.