



Kunbi Status for Marathas in Marathwada

Why in News?

The Maharashtra government has issued a Government Resolution (GR) enabling **Marathas in Marathwada to secure Kunbi caste certificates**, thereby qualifying for reservation benefits under the **Other Backward Classes (OBC)** category.

- The move draws on historical references in the **Hyderabad Gazette** that documented Marathas as Kunbis during the **Nizam's rule**.

The Hyderabad Gazette

- Before Independence, **Marathwada was part of the Hyderabad State** under the Nizam.
 - Official gazetteers from the period recorded demographic and caste details, including peasants, artisans, and occupational groups.
- The **Hyderabad Gazette of 1918** and even earlier records from **1884** identified sections of the Maratha community as Kunbis, an agrarian caste.
- The Nizam's administration **extended educational and job reservations to these groups**, recording them officially as Kunbis.
- These documents have become central to today's demand for OBC status, with activists notably Manoj Jarange Patil urging that Kunbi references be used to establish Maratha genealogies.

Government Resolution (GR)

- **About:** The GR provides a **structured framework** for verification, requiring applicants to demonstrate their Kunbi lineage with historical evidence. This will help **Marathas establish their Kunbi credentials** and access benefits under the OBC quota.
- **Committee Structure:** A three-member committee at the village level, comprising the gram revenue officer, gram panchayat secretary, and assistant agriculture officer, will review all applications.
- **Documentation:** Applicants who do not possess land ownership documents must submit affidavits proving their or their ancestors' residence in the area before **13 October 1967**. Affidavits or testimonies from relatives, clan members, or other villagers with Kunbi certificates will also be considered.
- **Issuance of Caste Certificates:** Based on these investigations, authorities will issue one of **three types of caste certificates**: Kunbi, Kunbi-Maratha, or Maratha-Kunbi.
 - However, blanket Kunbi status for all Marathas or expanding the definition to include "**sage soyre**" (**blood relations**) is unlikely to be accepted.

Committee Action and Expanded Evidence

- To strengthen implementation, the government had earlier set up the **Justice Sandeep Shinde Committee (Sept 2023)** to trace Kunbi records in Marathwada.
 - The panel has so far identified over 7,000 previously untraced entries, and its mandate has been extended till December 2025 to study additional gazetteers from Satara, Bombay, and Aundh.

- Additionally, amendments made in July 2024 to the **Maharashtra Caste Certificate Act, 2000**, have broadened the range of acceptable documents, easing access for landless farmers and agricultural laborers who often lack formal land records.

Maratha Community

- The Marathas, historically a **warrior-agrarian caste**, make up nearly **one-third of Maharashtra's population**.
- While they have long dominated state politics with 12 of 20 chief ministers since 1960 hailing from the community, many Marathas, **especially in rural areas**, have faced economic decline due to [agrarian distress](#) and shrinking opportunities.
- The present push for OBC inclusion stems from the Supreme Court's 2021 ruling, which struck down the state's **Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) Act, 2018**, that had granted Marathas a separate quota.
 - The Court held that the law breached the **50% reservation ceiling** and lacked sufficient grounds to establish Marathas as a "backward class."
 - Following this, sections of the community have sought recognition as Kunbis, already part of the OBC list, using historical records as evidence.
 - **Marathas from 11 Vidarbha districts** and some from North Maharashtra and Konkan are already registered as Kunbis to avail the OBC quota.

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