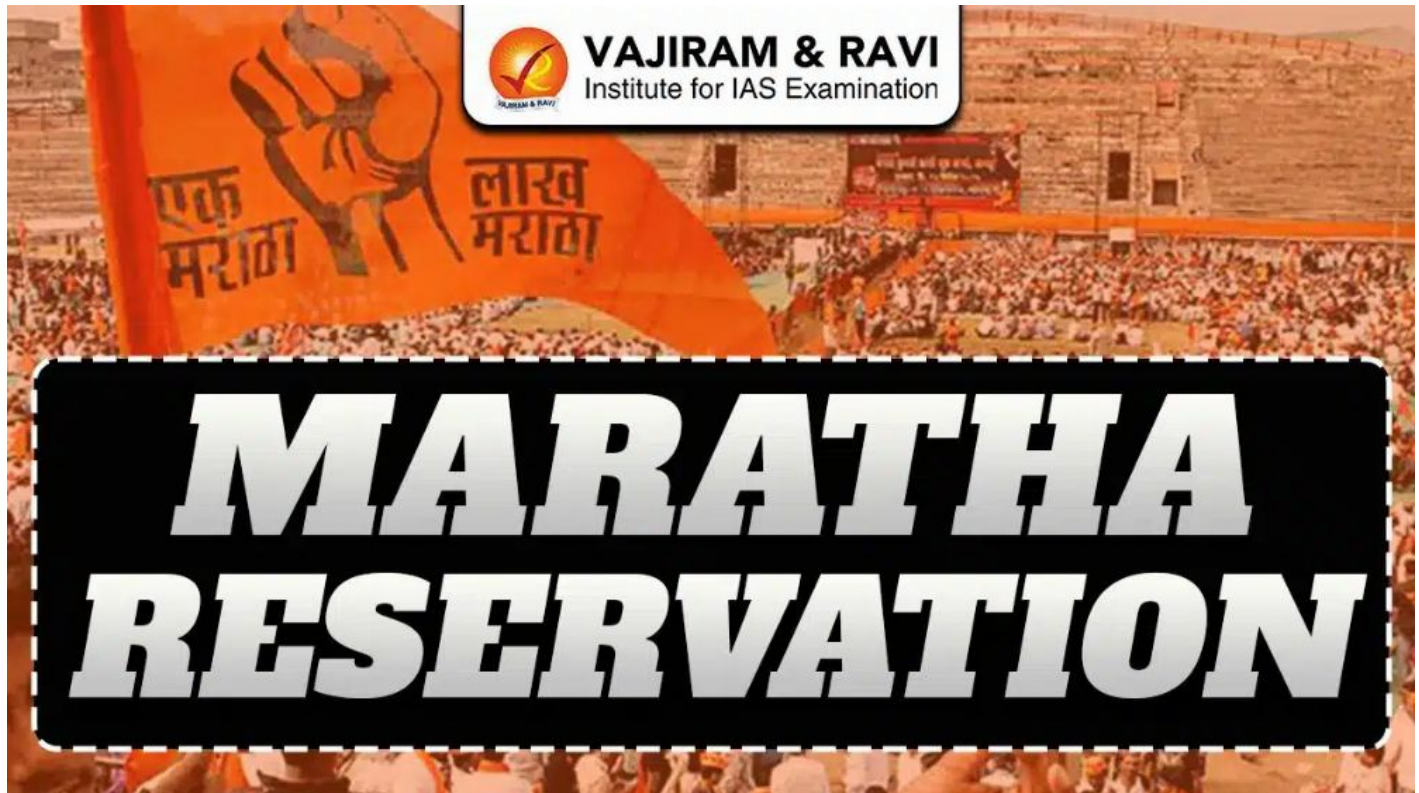


Maratha Reservation, Background, SEBC Act 2024, Commission Findings

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Maratha Reservation has been a long-standing demand by the Maratha Community in Maharashtra. Though historically dominant, the Maratha community today faces economic distress, land fragmentation and limited opportunities in education and government jobs. Hence there is increased demand for Maratha reservation in government jobs and educational institutions.

Maratha Reservation Background

The question of reservation for the Maratha community in Maharashtra has a long and contested history.

In 2014, **Narayan Rane committee** recommended a 16% quota for Marathas.

In 2018, on the recommendations of **Gaikwad Commission**, Maharashtra government enacted the Maharashtra State Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) Act 2018 granting 16% reservation to Marathas in government jobs and educational institutions. The Bombay High Court reduced this to 12% in education and 13% in jobs but it was struck down by the Supreme Court in May 2021, citing insufficient empirical data to justify exceeding the 50% quota ceiling.

In 2023, **Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission** was set up under Justice (Retd.) Sunil Shukre to reassess the reservation issue.

Findings of Maharashtra State Backward Class commission:

- Marathas make up 28% of Maharashtra's population, but 84% of the Marathas are socially or economically backward.
- 94% of farmer suicides in Maharashtra involve Marathas, highlighting acute agrarian distress.
- Marathas have limited representation in government jobs and administrative services.
- The Commission recommended separate reservations for Marathas to improve access to government jobs and educational institutions.

In response, **Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2024**, was enacted to provide a 10% reservation for the Maratha community in government jobs and educational institutions.

Maharashtra State SEBC Act, 2024

Salient features of Maratha State SEBC Act are as follows:

- The Act formally recognises the Maratha community as a Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) under the state law.
- It provides 10% reservation to Marathas in State government jobs, and in admissions to public as well as private educational institutions under Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the constitution.
- The act was drafted based on the report submitted by the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission, chaired by Justice (Retd.) Sunil Shukre which highlighted social and educational backwardness of Marathas within the state.
- Reservation benefits are limited to the non-creamy layer candidates.

Issues with Maharashtra State SEBC Act, 2024

The act **breaches the 50% reservation ceiling established in Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)**. Maharashtra currently has a reservation of 52%, including various categories such as SC, ST, OBC, Vimukt Jati, Nomadic Tribes, and others. With the addition of 10% reservation for the Marathas, the total reservation in the state will now reach 62%. Hence currently the 2024 act is under judicial scrutiny in Bombay high court.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/maratha-reservation/>

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