

# Govt files 2,500-page affidavit to back quota

'82% of Maratha community in state socially and financially backward'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 5

THE STATE government Monday filed an affidavit running into 2,500 pages in support of its stand on reserving seats in government jobs and educational institutions across the state for the Maratha community.

The affidavit has reports prepared by the (Pune-based) Gokhale Institute over the last three months, which establishes the facts related to various segments of the community, including sugarcane cutters, migrant labourers, head loaders and maid servants, proving that the Marathas account for a majority in these sectors. "The affidavit provides for first-of-its-kind data compiled by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, from each district. It states that 82 per cent of people from the Maratha community were found to be socially, financially backward. This also extends to the educational field. This data supports the findings of previous reports by the Bapat Commission, Rane Committee," said government pleader Abhinandan Vagyani, who appeared in the matter along with other senior counsel and filed the affidavit.

"The sugarcane cutters, house maids and farmers were also mostly found to be belonging to this community and were

found to be socially backward," said Vagyani.

According to him, according to the affidavit filed by the state, most of the farmers who committed suicide in Maharashtra over the past few years belonged to this community.

The data collected by the Rane Committee, references in Dr Ambedkar's and books by Jotiba Phule have been cited in support of the government's stand. The affidavit also has an annexure of the various Backward Class Commissions and comments by S G Devgaonkar, who was a member of the Bapat commission. "We have also relied on several books including Dr B R Ambedkar's work, which states that the Maratha community is socially backward," added Vagyani.

According to him, the Supreme Court states that reservation can exceed 50 per cent in exceptional circumstances. "In exceptional circumstances, it is allowed which we have provided for. We have also cited the example of Tamil Nadu where there is more than 50 per cent reservation," he said.

Earlier, senior counsels appearing for the government in different matters, V A Thorat and Ravi Kadam, had sought additional time saying that they needed to place data on record along with the affidavit which would be collated from various agencies.