

## **Regarding need to include `Dhangar` community of Maharashtra in the list of Scheduled Tribes-Laid**

**SHRI VISHALDADA PRAKASHBAPU PATIL (SANGLI):** The Dhangars, a significant pastoral group in Maharashtra, have long been seeking Scheduled Tribes (ST) status. Despite their socio-economic conditions and traditional lifestyle aligning with ST criteria, they remain classified under Other Backward Classes (OBC). This community has been traditionally nomadic, sharing characteristics with many ST communities, yet faces significant economic hardships and social marginalization. There's an argument that 'Dhangars' were mistakenly excluded from the ST list due to confusion with 'Dhangads', who are already included. The Maharashtra Government has repeatedly recommended their inclusion in the ST list. ST status would provide much-needed access to education, employment, and welfare schemes for the community. This matter requires immediate attention to ensure social justice and equitable development for the Dhangar community. I urge the Government to expedite the process of including the Dhangar community in the ST list by addressing the linguistic confusion in official records with Dhangads, while implementing interim measures to support the Dhangar community's development while the inclusion process is underway. If necessary, I also recommend conducting a comprehensive socio-economic survey to support their case to substantiate the Dhangar community's claim for ST status and identify specific needs.